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THE PASTOR OF THE DESERT

And his Martyr. Colleagues :

SKETCHES OF PAUL RABAUT

AND THE FRENCH PROTESTANTS OF THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

M. BRIDEL, PASTEUR,

LAUSANNE.

WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING PORTIONS OF PAUL RABAUT'S
WRITINGS, NOW FIRST PUBLISHED.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE following little work is a translation of "Trois Séances sur Paul Rabaut et les Protestants Français au XVIII^{me} Siècle," by M. Louis Bridel, Pasteur, Lausanne. It was prepared at the request of the Young Men's Christian Association in that city, and the first reading attracted an attention which led to repetition and publication. The few paragraphs that bear the impress of having been written in Switzerland will not on that account be less interesting to English readers, feeling as we may that our own nation shares with the Swiss the honour of offering a refuge to the oppressed and persecuted Protestants of France.

Should any one ask what is to be understood by "the Desert," an explanation shall be given in the words of a French Pastor on trial for the capital crime of exercising his ministry, as recorded in the minutes of his examination:—

“Questioned in what place he had baptized and administered the communion.

“Answered that it was in the open country, or in the desert.

“We called on the accused to tell us what he meant by the desert.

“The accused said that he meant by the desert lonely and uninhabited places where he assembled the faithful; sometimes in the neighbourhood of Alais, of Sauve, &c.”*

Whatever difference of opinion may prevail among Christians as to the splendid yet mysterious prophecy of the resurrection of the martyrs in Rev. xx. 4, † on one point there is little room for controversy. The blood shed and the sufferings endured in past ages for God and a pure gospel are not “water spilt on the ground,” even though success did not crown the heroic confessors and their cause for the time seemed lost. The thrones and dominions in the hearts and minds of men

* See “*Histoire des Eglises du Désert*,” by M. Charles Coquerel, 1841. Tome 1^{re}, p. 230.

† “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

are yet for them, for the doctrines they preached, the truths for which they made so brave a stand, and which they grasped so firmly in death. And if happier generations see the triumph and reign of those truths, will not the heroism and faith and patience of the men who waited and suffered for this end have a resurrection too, and form part of the character of the church in its best and brightest days to which we are looking forward? By the labours of historians and Christian biographers, many a noble character has been disentombed from the oblivion or misconception of ages and has risen again into the activity of a glorious example. The past has treasures of faith and fortitude yet to be unveiled : and amidst the fulness of gospel light and religious liberty granted to us, we may be stimulated to greater Christian devotedness, to higher and more unworldly aims, by communion with the self-renouncing and martyr spirits who have left their seal on the history of the church and the world.

It is as an humble contribution to this object that the Translator presents the following Sketches in their English garb. They are taken from the closing period of European martyrology, a decadent age, yet destined to usher in that series of

changes which we hope is preparing the way for the true freedom and regeneration of the human race. The Sermon of Paul Rabaut, inserted in the Appendix, will be found a valuable addition to the narrative. Readers who bring to its perusal associations of the lightness and frivolity usually attributed to the French character, may be struck with its adaptation to meet those tendencies in the people to whom it was addressed, by the earnest and perhaps rather sombre views of religious truth which it presents. The comprehensiveness of the discourse must have been a special necessity for times when opportunities for hearing were few and uncertain; and the brief summary of the Christian evidences indicates that the preacher was not unobservant of the advancing infidelity, which forty years later was to achieve a temporary triumph over all forms of religion in the land.

We must go a long way back in the history of our own country to find the period of martyrdom and proscription on the express ground of religious belief, but in France a single century will suffice to place us in the presence of the gallows and the block encountered for that cause alone. The knowledge of this fact, and others of a similar nature, has tended to produce discouragement in

the minds of English Christians with regard to the progress of evangelical truth on the Continent of Europe. They have heard more of the violence and injustice of the oppressor than of the faith and patience of the oppressed. While, in the middle of the last century, Whitfield, Wesley, Romaine, and others, were rekindling a new life in the churches of Britain, and labouring amidst the encouragements, if also the difficulties, of a period of revival, they probably knew little of that lonely man of the wilderness, who, in France, under proscription and outlawry, was preaching the Gospel with a fervency and clearness almost similar to their own; hunted like "a partridge in the mountains," yet stronger in his weakness than Louis XV. on his throne, for the work of the humble Pastor was to endure, in the existing and extending Protestant Churches of France, long after the power and state of the Monarch, the very foundation and frame-work of his government and the succession of his dynasty, had been swept away by the storms of revolution.

In judging of national character, we are prone to form our estimate from the dominant party, which has often been that of the persecutor; but if we would see the *possibilities* of religious

development in a people, we must find them in the heroes who suffered, rather than the fanatics who inflicted, the cruelties which stain the annals of the past. From this point of view how fine a type of Christians may we expect France, Spain, and Italy to present when the spirit of their "noble army of martyrs" shall fully animate the nations that once, by the immolation of their best and heaven-taught citizens, crushed out the divine life from their race and country!

That there are symptoms of such awakening in our day, those who are on the watch for the extension of the kingdom of God can thankfully recognise. The religion of Christ is not dead, is not obsolete, for the nations of Europe. The distorted caricatures of it will perish with the old and decaying tyrannies to which they are allied, but genuine Christianity will come forth again with might as in the days of the Reformation, free from the shackles of bigotry and worldliness, not the stereotype product of human machinery, but elastic, buoyant, as the living creature from the hand of God. That old Gospel which Paul and Luther preached will penetrate and move the present or a future age as it did the generations that are gone. Are not the nations waiting,

longing, groaning for this, though they yet know it not? But amidst the ferment of political changes there is also a spirit of renaissance in the *Churches* of the Continent. It is our privilege to stand on the vantage ground of three centuries of Protestantism and progressive liberty, and witness the dawn of a new religious era in Europe; and surely we who have received the birthright of the Reformation, not for ourselves or our own country alone, should be ready to support these scattered and struggling communities by warm sympathy and liberal help. If the perusal of the following pages should excite among English Christians some additional interest for those Churches which have so long and so severely suffered under papal domination and influence, the Translator will be amply rewarded, and any profits that may be realised by the work, after meeting the engagements incurred by publication, will be appropriated to assist the efforts now making for the spread of evangelical truth in France and the neighbouring countries. Acknowledgments are cordially rendered to M. Bridel for the prompt kindness with which he placed the “Trois Séances” at the Translator’s disposal for this object; and also to the Friend who, with a similar view, has contri-

buted the English version of the Ballads introduced into the narrative.

Special thanks are due to M. Athanase Coquerel, Junior, Pastor of the French Reformed Church, the possessor of the Rabaut Manuscripts, for his obliging liberality in forwarding copies from Paul Rabaut's own handwriting of the Sermon and Letter in the Appendix. They are unknown at present even to the French public, not having hitherto been printed, and are now, by permission of the proprietor, published for the first time in English.

May these echoes of a voice which spoke powerfully words of wisdom and goodness to listening multitudes, bear with them some portion of that blessing which was wont to attend the original utterances !

E. T. P.

JANUARY, 1861.

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Part the First.

EFFECTS OF THE REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES
—CONTEMPORARY OPINIONS OF THE PERSECUTIONS—
SAURIN—THE CLERGY OF FRANCE—MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ
—THE WORK OF ANTOINE COURT—MARTYRDOM OF
ROUSSEL—BALLAD—THE FRENCH ACADEMY AT LAU-
SANNÉ—YOUTH OF PAUL RABAUT—COMMENCEMENT OF
HIS MINISTRY.

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter ; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection ; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment : they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword : they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented : (of whom the world was not worthy :) they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.” HEB. xi. 24—26, 35—38.

I.

IF these words of Scripture may be applied to any part of the Christian church in modern times, they are surely appropriate to the French Protestants during the centuries which preceded the great Revolution. “No Christian people,” says their eloquent historian, M. de Felice, “have been for a longer period

under persecution than the Reformed Church of France.” The account of their terrible sufferings and of the constancy manifested under them fills the mind at once with horror and admiration.

How protracted the period of their oppression, from 1524, when the first martyr of the Reformation, Jacques Pavannes, was burned alive in the Place de Grève for having written against the worship of the Virgin and Saints, to 1775, when the two last protestant galley-slaves were released at the beginning of Louis the Sixteenth’s reign ! With some intervals of very short duration, it may be said that persecution raged against the Protestants in France during three-fourths of the sixteenth century, the whole of the seventeenth, and three-fourths of the eighteenth. Who can recount the sufferings, physical and moral, endured by hundreds of thousands of Christians during those two hundred and fifty years !

But without reproducing the melancholy picture of the persecutions which attacked the Reformed Church in France from its cradle, or tracing the course of its history in the seventeenth century, we will confine ourselves to a few words on the effects of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. This revocation, which was fully consummated in 1685, but which had been projected and incipiently commenced at the assassination of Henry IV. in 1610, produced a two-fold result. It led a considerable number of the Reformed to seek refuge

in Protestant countries where they might enjoy religious liberty; and it painfully affected the position of those remaining in France, who were subjected from that time to an exceptional and truly barbarous legislation.

The army of refugees, that new Israel flying from the yoke of a new Pharaoh, numbered at least 400,000 exiles. It was composed for the most part of a moral, intelligent, and industrious population who enriched the countries bordering on France: some even established themselves at so great a distance as the Cape of Good Hope, in the vicinity of which may still be found the remains of a French colony dating from that period.

Of this multitude of emigrants for the cause of religion, many settled in Switzerland. It is difficult to determine the exact number of these, but if we estimate them at twenty or twenty-five thousand we shall not greatly err. Some thousands remained in the Pays de Vaud, whither similarity of language and worship, as well as facilities of a secular kind attracted them; they were also well received in the Canton of Berne, where, on various occasions, opportune succour was afforded them. In the autumn of 1687, the streets and squares of the city of Lausanne were, during several weeks, covered with groups of families and individuals who, flying from persecution, met again within the walls of that hospitable city, after having

been obliged to separate at the frontier, to escape the strict surveillance and pursuit of which they were the objects. In a single day more than 2000 of these unfortunate victims of fanaticism were computed to have arrived at Lausanne, on their way to different countries. The number of French refugees who permanently established themselves in this city may be reckoned at 1500, the whole population of Lausanne not then exceeding seven or eight thousand. Of these fifteen hundred, about eighty were pastors, who continued in correspondence with their former churches, sometimes visiting them secretly at the hazard of their lives, as Claude Brousson, who, after several of these truly apostolic journeys, was seized at Pau, and hanged at Montpellier, in 1698. About 700 of these confessors of the gospel established themselves at Vevey,* 220 at Yverdon, 710 at Morges, 775 at Nyon. Most of our people number among their ancestors some one or more of these French Protestants; and many families among us are descended directly from the refugees, and have thus preserved a name rendered honourable by so much suffering and Christian courage.

It would be difficult to enumerate all the benefits which the Canton de Vaud has derived from these new comers of the 17th century. In a secular point of view, their influence was considerable :

* For an account of the escape of one family among these refugees, see Appendix. No. I.

some of them brought us improved agricultural processes, and productions formerly unknown to our soil; some introduced valuable manufactures; others founded or revived the commerce of our small towns. Viewed intellectually, their influence was not less considerable. Some of the refugees belonged to the educated and literary class, and they contributed to purify our language, till then rude and incorrect. Our national character has also received something from this French element. If there is amongst us something of an enterprising spirit, a touch of energy and vivacity, assuredly it is in a great measure attributable to this source. We owe much to the refugees also in a religious or protestant point of view; a faith more firm and enlightened, a greater attachment to liberty, respect for personal independence and the rights of conscience.

The number of the Reformed who remained in France, and thus by choice or necessity prepared the future of French Protestantism, is estimated by Sismondi at about a million. Of these, between two and three hundred thousand, according to the same historian, perished by persecution; some being arrested in their flight and consigned to the galleys, others shut up in prisons, hospitals, or convents, in which barbarous treatment and even poison were called in to aid in shortening their lives; while from ten to fifteen thousand died on the wheel or the gibbet, tortured, burned, decapitated, or hanged.

The Protestants were overwhelmed with vexatious, persecuting and cruel edicts. From 1680 to 1730, that is in the space of only half a century, no fewer than a hundred and twenty of these may be counted, increasingly oppressive. These edicts not only deprived them of religious liberty, of their assemblies, which were prohibited, of their pastors, who were condemned to death, but assailed them in their property and means of subsistence, expelling them from all public employments, shutting them out from every honourable career. Their personal liberty was attacked, and they were hunted like wild beasts; then, worst of all, their children were taken from them, to be educated by force in a religion which their parents abhorred; even their lives were often sacrificed, sometimes by excruciating tortures. These edicts, and the terrible dragonnades which enforced the execution of them, serve to explain, though certainly not to justify, the war of the Camisards.

II.

How were these atrocious persecutions regarded by the refugee Protestants in neighbouring countries, and what was said about them there? We may see this in several of the sermons of Saurin, preached at the Hague, and particularly in the

admirable peroration of his discourse on the 1st of January, 1710, where, in the name of all the refugee churches, he gives utterance to his feelings towards France, and the monarch who was the author of so much misery.

“Are our prayers exhausted?” cried the great orator. “Alas, in our days of joy should we forget our sorrows? Happy inhabitants of these Provinces, often as you have heard the tale of our sufferings, while we rejoice in your prosperity you will not withhold compassion from our calamities. And we, brands plucked out of the fire, sad fragments of our unhappy churches; we, my dear brethren, whom the misfortunes of the times have cast on these shores, shall we forget the suffering remnants of our own body? Groans of captives, pastors in tears, virgins outraged, solemn feasts interrupted, sanctuaries deserted, apostates, martyrs, scenes of blood and cries of anguish;—let the long catalogue of woes touch the heart of this assembly. ‘If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.’ May peace be within thy walls; may God be moved with the extremity of our misery, if not with the fervour of our prayers; with the desolation of our sanctuaries, if not with the calamities of our lot; with the exigencies of those immortal souls of which the persecutors would

despoil us, if not with the wants of these frail bodies which we drag from country to country.

“And thou, redoubtable prince, whom I formerly honoured as my king, and whom I still respect as the scourge in the hand of the Lord, thou also shalt have part in my prayers. These Provinces which thou art threatening, but which the arm of the Lord defends, these climes which thou art peopling with fugitives, but fugitives animated by Christian charity, these walls which enclose a thousand martyrs whom thou hast made, but whom faith renders triumphant, shall still resound with benedictions on thy behalf. May God rend away the fatal bandage which blinds thine eyes to the truth! May He forget the rivers of blood with which thou hast covered the earth, and which thy reign has seen poured forth! May He blot out from His book the evils thou hast done to us, and, in recompensing those who have suffered, pardon those who have inflicted them! God grant that after having been to us, to the church, the minister of His judgments, thou mayest be the dispenser of His favours and the minister of His mercies! I return to you, my brethren, I embrace you all in my prayers. But you must yourselves draw from the fountain: it is not enough for a fellow-mortal to supplicate on our behalf, we must all go to the very throne of God, wrestle with the Almighty by our prayers and tears, and not let Him go till He has blessed

us. Magistrates, people, soldiers, citizens, pastors, flocks, come and bend the knee before the Monarch of the world. And you, birds of prey, gnawing cares, earthly anxieties, away, and trouble not our sacrifice."

Side by side with these noble and touching words, should be placed the pompous eulogies lavished by Bossuet on Louis XIV., "the vanquisher of heresy," and the adulation of the assemblies of French ecclesiastics. We find a sample of this in the address delivered on a solemn occasion, in the name of the clergy, by the Abbé Colbert, Archdeacon of Rouen, thanking Louis XIV. for the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. This is their language to the misguided monarch: "As we must acknowledge, Sire, the interest we have in the extinction of heresy, our joy would, in some measure, have predominated over our grief, if to subdue this hydra a painful necessity had forced your zeal to have recourse to fire and sword, as has been done in the reigns of your predecessors. We should have participated in a holy war, whatever repugnance we might feel to the shedding of blood; we should have prayed for the success of your consecrated arms, even while trembling to see the terrible executions, of which the God of vengeance was making you the awful instrument, and at the close, we should have mingled our voices with the public acclamations for your victories, though we might sigh in secret

over a triumph which, with the defeat of the enemies of the church, would have involved the destruction of our brethren. But now, when you combat the pride of heresy only by the gentleness and wisdom of your government, when your laws, sustained by your benefactions, are your sole weapons, we have only to render pure thanks to Heaven, who has inspired your Majesty with these mild and judicious methods of vanquishing error, and enabled you, by mingling with a little severity many benefits and favours, to bring back to the church those who were unhappily separated from it. This great work, which your zeal has accomplished, will be regarded by succeeding ages as the source of your prosperity and the crowning point of your glory!"

If we wish to know the opinions entertained among the nobility and courtiers, let us hear also the witty and amiable Madame de Sévigné on this tragical subject. The following extracts from her letters refer to the sufferings of the Protestants. "M. de Grignan," says she, "has taken a dreadfully fatiguing journey into the mountains of Dauphiny, to scatter and punish miserable Huguenots who come out of their holes but, when they find they are pursued, vanish like ghosts to avoid extermination. This kind of flying, or invisible enemies, gives infinite trouble, and in short they are never got rid of; for they disappear in a moment, and then as soon as one's back is turned, issue from

their dens again.”—*Letter to the Count de Bussy, 16th March, 1689.*

“Father Bourdaloue is going away, by the King’s order, to preach at Montpellier, and in those provinces where so many people have been converted without knowing why. Father Bourdaloue will teach them. The dragoons have been very good missionaries hitherto. The preachers who are now being sent will complete the work. You have doubtless seen the edict by which the King revokes that of Nantes. Nothing can be more admirable than its contents, and no king ever has done, or ever will do, a more honourable act.”—*To the same Count de Bussy.*

“I admire the conduct of the King in destroying the Huguenots; the wars which have been waged against them before, and the St. Bartholomews have multiplied and given vigour to that sect. His Majesty has gradually undermined it, and the edict which he has just published, supported by dragoons and Bourdaloues, has been the *coup de grace*.”—*Letter from M. de Bussy to Madame de Sévigné, 1685.*

“Every body is now a missionary; every one thinks he has a mission, especially the magistrates and provincial governors, with a few dragoons at their back; it is the greatest and noblest work which could have been devised and executed.”—*Madame de Sévigné to the Count de Bussy, 1685.*

III.

At the close of the War of the Camisards, which lasted from 1701 to 1706, the French Reformed Church was almost ruined, and on the brink of utter annihilation. There was no longer any of that internal discipline which had raised so high the morality of the Protestants, there was no link of connexion between the different churches; for a long period there had been no synods. The work of ecclesiastical construction, accomplished by the first synod, held at Paris in 1559, appeared to be entirely destroyed.

There were now scarcely any regular religious assemblies or means of solid instruction. Domestic worship was indeed still maintained in some families, but many Protestants, in order to escape the violence of persecution, participated outwardly in some of the Roman Catholic ceremonies, and allowed themselves to be considered new converts. There were no educated pastors to preach the Word of God and expound it to the people. Expelled by the Edict of Revocation, which enjoined them to leave France under penalty of the galleys, and soon after, on pain of death to themselves and to all who should give them any kind of assistance or protection, they were dispersed in exile, to the number of more than six hundred. They had

been gradually replaced in various localities by fanatics calling themselves prophets, or professing to be inspired, whose declamations wearied and disgusted men of sense.

At this last extremity God raised up Antoine Court, the man whom, in their just gratitude, the French Reformed Christians have styled the "Restorer of Protestantism."

Born in 1696, of a poor family, we find him, from the age of seventeen, reader and preacher in the assemblies of the desert which, at rare intervals, were then held. From the age of nineteen he appears to have been impressed with the critical state of Protestantism in his native country, and the internal evils which threatened its ruin, and from that time he resolved to re-constitute the synods, to re-organise the regular religious assemblies, and to labour for the preparation of able, pious, and educated ministers who should preach the word of God in them.

He began by convoking a synod, the first since the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It was the 21st of October, 1715. At that time Louis XIV., confronted by divine justice, at the close of that long life of glory and despotism, of adultery and blood, lay at the point of death in his palace of Versailles, abandoned by his people and tormented by remorse. The testament of the great king was about to be ignominiously set aside

by the parliament, his funeral procession to be greeted with insults and curses from the people, stones and mud thrown at the very coffin which contained his remains. And that reformed religion, so often overwhelmed, for the overthrow of which so many medals had been struck to Louis XIV., so many flattering pictures painted, and even a statue of bronze raised to him in the Hotel de Ville of his capital,—that religion, on the entire annihilation of which the distinguished Bossuet had congratulated his master, was raised from its ruins by the hands of a youth of nineteen. Does not the Lord always delight to make his power manifest in the weakness of his servants?

A second synod was held the following year, 1716, and presided over, like the preceding, by Antoine Court, whose signature is accompanied by that of other pastors, the greater part of whom subsequently died on the scaffold as martyrs for their faith.

Court next applied himself to re-organise the public worship of the Protestants; he revived and summoned as frequently as possible regular religious assemblies in accordance with the ancient discipline. At first these consisted of a very small number of persons, from six to twelve forming the congregation. But undiscouraged by the want of immediate success, he continued the work. With the same view, and at the peril of his life, he made numerous preaching tours. We find in

the documents of that period an account of one of these evangelistic journeys which lasted two months, during which he held thirty-two meetings: some of these, especially towards the close, numbered between two and three thousand hearers.

IV.

These missionary journeys were full of danger, and often cost the lives of those who undertook them. Such, for example, was the fate of a friend of Antoine Court, the young pastor Roussel, who was hanged at Montpellier in November, 1728, by the sentence of the Governor Daudé. Roussel had been betrayed and denounced by a man who thus gained the reward of 5500 livres. This amount, enormous for that time, had been promised to any one who should cause the discovery of a minister in the exercise of his functions. The only source of information we have respecting the death of Roussel is a lament or ballad, the greater part of which we will give in the touching and picturesque simplicity of its antique phraseology. This kind of literature has left us some documents of the piety and sorrows of the people. We may easily imagine a mother in some isolated cottage, as she rocks the cradle of her infant, giving the earliest protestant education to the young family gathered

around her, by singing in a soft and plaintive voice the following verses :—

Mes enfants, écoutez le cruel traitement
Qu'on a fait à Roussel, ce jeune proposant ;
Il a été vendu, ah ! quelle perfidie !
Comme on vend de la chair dans une boucherie.

Il fut pris, arrêté à la côte d'Aulas,
Lié et garrotté par les mains des soldats.
On le mène au Vigan dedans cette posture,
Toujours en lui chantant toute sorte d'injures.

Ils l'ont pris et mené devant Monsieur Daudé ;
En entrant dans sa chambre on l'a interrogé :
On lui a demandé : “ Que faites-vous en ville ? ”
— “ Je suis venu exprès pour prêcher l'Évangile. ”

On lui a demandé où avait-il prêché :
— “ Partout où j'ai trouvé des chrétiens rassemblés. ”
On lui a demandé où faisait sa demeure :
Il leur a répondu : “ Le ciel est ma couverture. ”

Le soir sont arrivés beaucoup de grenadiers,
Qui l'ont pris et mené tout droit à Montpellier,
Tout droit à Montpellier, dedans la citadelle ;
C'était depuis longtemps la maison des fidèles.

Sa mère le vient voir avec de ses amis,
Son beau-frère avec elle ; elle lui dit : “ Mon fils,
Si tu as prié Dieu, en France, c'est un crime ;
Il n'y a point de pardon ; tu en seras victime. ”

Les Jésuites souvent vont le solliciter,
Pour sortir de prison, de religion changer :
Mais notre prisonnier sa religion dispute,
Et pour la vérité hardiment les rebute.

Quand il vit les archers et le prévôt venir,
Avecque le bourreau pour le faire mourir,
A prié le bon Dieu de lui donner courage,
Et de ses ennemis pouvoir vaincre l'outrage.

On le sort de prison pour le mener au lieu,
Là où il devait rendre son âme à son Dieu,
La tête, les pieds nus, ayant au cou la corde,
Le long de son chemin chanta *miséricorde*.*

Quand il fut arrivé tout auprès du poteau,
Ce bienheureux Roussel leva les yeux en haut,
Monta long de l'échelle,—sans lui faire aucun' peine,
Voyant le ciel ouvert comme fit St. Etienne.

Après être monté, il dit cette raison :
“ Pardonnez-les, Seigneur, ne savent ce qu'ils font,”
Et puis dit au bourreau : “ Toi et tout's ces personnes,
Qui de mal m'aurent fait, de bon cœur je pardonne.”

Ainsi finis ses jours, le bienheureux Roussel,
Et son âme à l'instant s'envole dans le ciel,
Pour y aller jouir d'une gloire éternelle . . .
Faisons tous comme lui si Dieu nous y appelle.

The following imitation in English has been supplied :—

Dear children, now listen, while sadly I tell
The tragical fate of the Pastor Roussel,
Who was basely betrayed for a guerdon of gold,
As the flesh from the stall of the butcher is sold.

In the district of Aulas the victim was found,
And by pitiless soldiers was ruthlessly bound,
Then with insults and threats he was hurried along,
In this cruel guise, to be tried at Vigan.

* Le Psaume li.

Thus fettered, they dragged him before Judge Daudé,
 No time was allowed him to think what to say :
 "What business have you here ?" the Judge sternly cried ;
 "To preach the pure Gospel of Christ ;" he replied.

"And where do you preach your heretical creed ?"
 "Wherever the faithful my services need."
 "In what place do you live then ? what house do you own ?"
 "The blue vault above is my shelter alone."

'Tis evening : the soldiers again seize their prey
 And straight to Montpellier they lead him away ;
 When there, in the castle their victim they leave,
 Whose dungeons so often the faithful receive.

His mother, with friends, came to visit his cell,
 And she said, as she bade him a final farewell,
 "My son, if in France you have ventured to pray,
 For such an offence with your life you must pay."

By the promise of pardon, the Jesuits try
 To induce the brave prisoner his faith to deny ;
 But the truth he defends with a skill so profound
 As to baffle their snares and their wiles to confound.

When the guards and the chief executioner came
 To lead him to death amid insults and shame,
 He prayed for fresh courage to conquer his foes,
 By enduring whatever their rage could impose.

The path to the gallows he fearlessly trod,
 Glad his life to resign in the service of God,
 With the rope round his neck, his head and feet bare,
 And the funeral hymn swelling loud on the air.

Thus he mounted the scaffold, with martyr zeal fired,
 And, like Stephen, with visions of glory inspired,
 From his features upraised joy had banished all care,
 For he saw heaven opened to welcome him there.

From the platform of death his last words were but few :
 "O pardon them, Lord, they know not what they do."
 Then he said to the hangman : " On thee and each foe
 Who has wronged me I hearty forgiveness bestow."

Thus ended his course, the thrice-blessed Roussel,
 And departed in glory eternal to dwell :
 And if God to like trials should call *us*, may we
 Be as constant, as pure, as devoted as he.

V.

The third object contemplated by Court was the foundation of an establishment abroad for the education of the Pastors of the Desert. After many journeys and researches, he chose Lausanne as the seat of this School of Theology. On his arrival he was received with much warmth and cordiality ; the freedom of the city was presented to him ; and here, soon after, with assistance obtained from England, Holland, and the Reformed Cantons of Switzerland, he founded and set in order the French Academy which, from 1730 to 1812, alone furnished pastors to Protestant France. How many of these candidates for martyrdom were prepared in this institution, and how many pastors issued from it, cannot now be estimated with precision. While we hesitate to admit the number of more than seven hundred given by M. Weiss, in his " History of the Refugees," we

cannot reduce it to one hundred, as given by M. Coquerel in his "History of the Churches of the Desert." Some documents which appear worthy of credit fix at about twenty-five the number of French students usually in the Academy, and the studies were generally continued for three years: from these data and some others, it would appear that five or six young ministers on an average went out from it annually, which would give about four hundred and fifty as the total number of labourers prepared by this institution during the eighty years of its existence. Antoine Court, with the title of Deputy-general of the Churches, was the President and soul of the Academy. Professor Polier de Bottens seconded him powerfully, and assisted him to organise completely this School of Pastors for the Desert, of which he was himself the Dean till his death.

Among the earlier Professors mention is also made of Salchli, Besson, Alphonse Turretin, Ami Lullin, a Genevese, Professor of Ecclesiastical History, and Ruchat, the historian of the Reformation in Switzerland. At the time of the dissolution of the Academy in 1812, after the foundation of the Institute at Montauban, by Napoleon, the work, though still important, had perhaps lost something of its evangelical purity. Professor Durand, from the valuable services he rendered, was its chief support. For twenty-seven years he had given his paternal care to the French

students. The names of Professors S. Secretan, Fr. Bugnion, D. Levade, E. A. Chavannes, who died in 1800, Verrey-Francillon, Chavannes-Bugnion, may be also mentioned.

It was at this Academy then that so many truly heroic men, ready to sacrifice their lives for the preaching of the gospel, were prepared for the ministerial office. They have for the most part remained obscure to the eyes of men; yet the highest kind of greatness was theirs, that of self-renunciation, of entire devotedness to a holy cause. None of them acquired celebrity except Court de Gébelin, the only son of Antoine Court, Paul Rabaut, and Rabaut-Saint-Etienne, his eldest son.

VI.

Paul Rabaut, whose life will henceforth be the object of our attention, and around whom will be grouped the principal events affecting French Protestantism in the 18th century, was not a man of genius, nor even of extraordinary talent. Nor did he perform any of those brilliant actions which attract public attention and acquire glory. But he had that which is most wanting in our times, and too often in ourselves, *a character*, an energetic will in the service of a simple and profound faith. He had a complete consecration to his duty, to his

mission, that is to say, to his God. To study such an individuality is indeed to steep the soul again in the sources of Christian fidelity and true courage.

Paul Rabaut was born in 1718. He was the son of a woollen draper, a pious Protestant, whose house often served as a temporary retreat for the preachers of the Desert. From his childhood, young Rabaut accompanied and guided these intrepid men in the woods and wild places of the neighbourhood, and the conversations he had with them strengthened him in the faith. At the age of fifteen or sixteen, he was induced by one of them to follow the same career. He recognised it as his duty, and he decided thenceforth to renounce every bright or certain prospect of a worldly kind, and to offer his life to the Lord in the service of his brethren. He became a candidate for the ministry. And how, at that time, were the preparatory studies for that office carried on? It was not then a choice between so many celebrated colleges or so many distinguished professors; the storm of persecution had overthrown or dispersed them all. The candidate attended for some time a Pastor of the Desert, and received first the impression of his example, an example of self-abnegation, often sublime, then at rare intervals, his instructions, which the scantiness of time, of liberty, and of books for study, rendered assuredly very incomplete.

Called at the age of twenty, in 1738, to be Pastor at Nismes, Rabaut married, during the following year, Madelaine Gaydan, a young woman whose piety and courage were equal to his own. Of this courage, as well as of her devotedness, she gave an early proof, when she and her husband, becoming aware that Rabaut's course of training had not been complete enough to render him equal to the important work he had undertaken at Nismes, decided to separate by mutual consent, in order that he might repair to the Academy at Lausanne to prosecute his studies more thoroughly. Paul Rabaut accordingly left his young wife for three years and departed for the Academy, whence he returned to Nismes in 1743. We do not possess any document respecting his sojourn in our beautiful country. What effect did the magnificence of nature produce on these young men? Did they see it? Did it exert on them that fascination which we have often experienced? Or was it with them, as is related by the good chronicler to whom we owe the biography of the celebrated Abbot of Clairvaux? "Bernard," he tells us in his artless Latin, "walking all day by the Lake of Lausanne, paid no attention to it, or rather saw not that he saw it. In the evening, when his travelling companions were conversing about the lake which they had admired, Bernard asked them where the lake was, and they were all astonished at his question."

On his return to Nismes, Rabaut, notwithstanding his youth, stood high in the confidence of the church in which he carried on his ministry, and of the Protestants in the country at large; hence we find him from this period the Moderator of several Synods. A melancholy but certain proof of his influence and activity is afforded by the redoubled severity to which the churches were subjected soon after his arrival at Nismes. The Chateau d'If (in a small island opposite the port of Marseilles), the Tower of Constance (near to Aigues-Mortes), and other public edifices were filled with men and women as prisoners; in many places even the dragonnades were recommenced with new rigour.

During this period Rabaut was obliged to conceal himself, and to exercise his ministry in the most profound secrecy. He frequently preached in the woods and waste ground in the environs of Nismes. The Protestants, thirsting for the Word of God, exposed themselves to the greatest dangers in order to attend these meetings. He gathered round him sometimes as many as ten thousand hearers, whom his clear and penetrating voice reached without difficulty. His preaching, simple, sober in thought and expression, copious in Scripture, was especially remarkable for its unction. He often extemporized with warmth, and the tears of his auditors responded to his own emotion. At other times he wrote his discourses, many of

which, yet unpublished, are preserved with his numerous manuscripts. Besides preaching, and the care bestowed on his people from house to house, he paid great attention to the religious instruction of the young, being often obliged for this purpose to go from one farm to another, or to remote localities.

The influence of Paul Rabaut over his co-religionists appeared on the arrest of the minister Désubas, an event on which we shall pause a few moments, because it throws light on the situation and the feelings of the Protestants in the south of France. Désubas was a young pastor, beloved and respected by his own flock and by the neighbouring churches, on account of his amiable disposition, his devotedness, zeal, and talents. He was betrayed by a wretched apostate, and seized while sleeping in a lonely farmhouse. He was conducted to Montpellier under a good escort, but on the road thither attempts were repeatedly made by parties of Protestants to snatch him from the soldiers who guarded him, and the scaffold which he would infallibly find at the end of his journey. The troops fired several times, and a number of Protestants were killed and wounded. On one occasion especially, a considerable body of men, women, and children, presented themselves at the gates of the little town of Vernoux, to implore the restoration of the young Pastor. They were unarmed, but they uttered cries of grief, mingled

also doubtless with some exclamations of anger, on which the inhabitants of the town, who were Catholics, coming to the aid of the disordered soldiers, and firing from their windows on the tumultuous assembly, thirty persons were killed, and about two hundred wounded. The Pastors of the Desert loudly condemned this attempt at resistance on the part of the Protestants, and the captive minister himself contributed much to calm the irritation of the inhabitants of Vernoux. A more numerous body of Protestants, for the most part armed this time, having returned the next day, it is impossible to say how far the mischief might have extended if the Pastor Désubas had not found means, from the depths of his prison, to circulate a note among the multitude to this effect. "I earnestly entreat you, gentlemen, to retire. There has only been too much blood already shed. I am very tranquil, and entirely resigned to the will of God." He was immediately obeyed. But on the morrow and succeeding days the same troubles were renewed in other places where Protestants abounded. It seems that on one occasion they were on the point of succeeding in the rescue of Désubas from his escort. But Paul Rabaut, who, in the recesses where he was obliged habitually to conceal himself, never lost sight of what might affect the condition of the churches, and who saw the extreme danger which would have attended the success of a movement that seemed recommencing a war of the

Cevennes, arrived at the critical moment, rushed into the midst of the exasperated bands, entreated, remonstrated, and at length persuaded them to return to submission and order. From that time the convoy pursued its way in peace. Désubas went forward to appear before the Estates of Languedoc, then assembled, and Rabaut returned to the exercise of his own hazardous ministry.

Part the Second.

EXECUTION OF DÉSUBAS—INCREASED SEVERITIES—RABAUT SEIZED AND RELEASED—BÉNEZET AND MOLINES—NEW DANGERS INCURRED BY PAUL RABAUT—JEAN FABRE—THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE DESERT—STYLE OF PREACHING—INCREASED DANGER OF PAUL RABAUT—MODEST ESTIMATE OF HIS OWN LABOURS—ARREST OF ROCHETTE AND THE THREE DE GRENIERS—EFFORTS OF RABAUT ON THEIR BEHALF—LETTER OF J. J. ROUSSEAU—EXECUTION OF ROCHETTE AND THE THREE NOBLES.

“From Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews: and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you and have taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” ACTS xx. 17—24.

VII.

THIS portraiture of the life of a true pastor may well characterize the ministry of Paul Rabaut; and the last words, in which the apostle declares that he counts not his life dear to him so that he may testify the gospel of the grace of God, may serve as an inscription for the career

of zeal and self-denial of the Pastor of the Desert whose history we are sketching.

We left him successful in tranquillizing the protestant multitude who were set upon delivering Désubas, and then returning to his ceaseless labours and perils.

On arriving at Montpellier, Désubas (also called Lubac) was confined in the citadel and examined by the commander La Devèze. A popular ballad of the period informs us both of the nature of the interrogatory and the sentiments which animated the Pastor and his persecuted brethren. We give it in its unaffected simplicity:—

LE COMMANDANT.

“ N’êtes-vous pas ministre,
Ou bien prédicateur,
Et de ce cas sinistre
N’êtes-vous pas l’auteur ?
Pouvez-vous en conscience,
Sans nul ordre du Roi,
Enseigner dans la France
Et prêcher votre loi ?

“ Notre glorieux prince
A proscrit pour jamais
De toutes nos provinces
La foi des réformés.
Pourquoi faire violence ?
Monsieur, vous avez tort,
Et selon l’ordonnance
Vous méritez la mort.”

LE MINISTRE.

Lubac avec constance
 Répond à ce seigneur :
 —“ Si j’ai prêché en France
 La loi de mon Sauveur,
 Les apôtres en Judée,
 En Galilée épars,
 Prêchèrent en ces contrées
 En dépit de César.

“ L’on n’est jamais rebelle
 Quand on fait en tout lieu,
 D’un cœur brûlant de zèle,
 La volonté de Dieu.
 Peut-on, dans nos provinces,
 Dites-moi, Monseigneur,
 Pour obéir au prince,
 Délaisser le Sauveur ?

“ Si, par les ordonnances,
 J’ai mérité la mort,
 Que la Toute Puissance
 Décide de mon tort ;
 C’est à ce divin Père
 Que j’élève mon cœur ;
 En lui mon âme espère
 D’une constante ardeur.

“ Aucun ne me peut nuire
 Sans son pouvoir divin ;
 Tout est sous son empire ;
 C’est lui qui me soutient.
 Sans faire résistance,
 Je suis prêt à partir :
 Prononcez ma sentence,
 Je suis prêt à mourir.”

Thus imitated in English :—

THE COMMANDER.

“ Art thou then the preacher
 Whose troublesome case,
 As protestant teacher,
 We try in this place ?
 Wilt thou dare to proclaim
 Without the King’s leave,
 Or in France to maintain
 We thy law should receive ?

“ Our great prince has decreed,
 And henceforth will take care,
 That his realms shall be freed
 From this protestant snare.
 You are doing great ill
 Thus his laws to defy,
 And if obstinate still
 You are worthy to die.”

THE MINISTER.

Thus Lubac explained
 To his Lordship severe :
 “ If in France I’ve proclaimed
 The Great Master I fear,
 I but follow those saints,
 In Judea oppressed,
 Who braved Cesar’s restraints
 And the Saviour confessed.

“ No rebels are they
 Who with zeal, in all lands,
 Only seek to obey
 God’s most sacred commands.

Say, my Lord, can we dare
 This submission to make,
 And thereby to declare
 That our God we forsake ?

“ If indeed by our laws
 I am worthy to die,
 The Almighty my cause
 Shall adjudge from on high.
 In that Father above
 All my hopes find their place ;
 I rejoice in His love,
 His salvation embrace.

“ None can compass my fall
 Unless He shall ordain ;
 He is sovereign of all,
 And His power will sustain.
 With submission I go
 Your stern sentence to meet,
 In His service I know
 Even death will be sweet.”

Such is one of the forms in which the popular sentiments found expression.

A month afterwards (January, 1746), Désubas was examined by the Governor Lenain.* The reminiscences of the country, the correspondence and memoirs of the time affirm that the calm and noble deportment of the minister throughout his

* This grand-nephew of Lenain de Tillemont, the able Jansenist historian, should have remembered, that the Jesuits whose fury against the Reformed he now seconded, had in 1711 profaned the tombs of the learned recluses of Port Royal, and thus disturbed the ashes of the most illustrious of his ancestors.

trial, his pleasing countenance, his dignity and grace, produced a deep impression on his judges, who *all wept* on pronouncing the sentence of death, which was made obligatory upon them by the terrible precision of the laws and the rigorous orders of the Court of Versailles. The accounts add that, when judgment was given, Désubas was the only person who appeared unmoved. On the 2nd of February he was conducted to the place of execution. He came out of prison stripped of his outer garments and having his legs bare. The composure of his aspect, his beauty, his youth, (he was but twenty-six years of age), produced a vivid impression on the multitude that surged in on every side, and through which the cortége could with difficulty force its way. The sympathy increased when, on arriving at the foot of the gallows, he knelt down to pray. Afterwards he attempted to address the people, but the rolling of the drums stifled the sound of his voice. The accounts written on the spot close the recital in these artless and touching words. “At length, mounting courageously to the top of the ladder, he manifested to the last moment so much constancy and piety that all present without distinction, Protestants and Catholics, melted into tears; the former blessing God for the edification the martyr gave them; the latter congratulating them upon the honour they derived from his courageous fidelity.”

The stanzas which follow express the religious feelings which popular opinion ascribed to the martyred Pastor. We may judge of the effect produced by such ballads when sung by the mountaineers of Gevaudan or Vivarais, on their way to and from the almost inaccessible places appointed for their religious assemblies.

LE MINISTRE SUR LA PLACE DE L'EXÉCUTION.

“ Mon sort n'est pas à plaindre,
Il est à désirer :
Je n'ai plus rien à craindre ;
Car Dieu est mon berger.
C'est mon fort, ma défense.
Qu'aurais-je à redouter ?
En Lui mon espérance,
Mon unique rocher !

“ Mon âme, prends courage
Car c'est pour aujourd'hui
Que tu sors d'esclavage
Pour t'en aller vers Lui.
Tu vas être ravie,
Dans ce charmant séjour,
D'ouïr la symphonie
De la céleste cour.

“ Avecque les saints anges
Tu joindras ton concert,
Pour chanter les louanges
Du roi de l'univers ;
Dans la gloire éternelle,
La robe tu prendras,
De couleur immortelle,
Après tous ces combats.

“ Allons en diligence,
 Mon cœur, dans ce moment,
 Revêtu de constance,
 Embrasser le tourment ;
 Allons avecque zèle,
 D’un regard gracieux,
 Monter sur cette échelle
 Qui nous conduit aux cieux.”

Il part pour la supplice,
 Escorté à l’entour
 D’archers de la justice,
 De quatorze tambours,
 Qui jusqu’à la potence
 Roulent incontinent
 Pour vaincre sa constance,
 Pour étourdir ses sens.

Etant à la potence,
 Ce martyr généreux
 Implore l’assistance
 Du monarque des cieux ;
 D’un courage héroïque
 A l’échelle il monta ;
 Vers la troupe angélique
 Son âme s’envola.

Ainsi finit la course
 D’un généreux pasteur,
 Pour aller à la source
 D’un céleste bonheur.
 Que ton sort est aimable,
 Et qu’il est glorieux ;
 Ta joie délectable
 Dans les augustes lieux !

—Faisons cesser nos plaintes,
 Fidèles protestants,
 Nos sanglots, nos complaints
 Et nos regrets cuisants.
 Lubac n'est plus à plaindre
 Il est hors du danger ;
 Il n'a plus rien à craindre,
 Ni rien à désirer.

Chérissons sa mémoire,
 Imitons son ardeur,
 Suivons-le dans la gloire
 Et d'esprit et de cœur.
 Que si Dieu nous appelle
 Au tourment rigoureux,
 Imitons ce fidèle,
 Nous serons bienheureux.

THE MINISTER AT THE PLACE OF EXECUTION.

“ No sad fate is mine,
 But one all might desire,
 With my Shepherd Divine
 Nought can terror inspire.
 He's my tower, my defence,
 I am free from alarm ;
 Deathless hope springs from thence,
 God my rock shields from harm.

“ Then, my soul, be not craven,
 For soon thou shalt be
 Soaring upwards to heaven,
 From all bondage set free.
 Perfect rapture abounds
 In that blissful abode ;
 Sweetest music resounds
 From the courts of thy God.

“ Angels holy and bright
 Those full harmonies raise ;
 Thou with them shalt unite
 Thy great Sovereign to praise :
 There with glory supernal
 Shalt thou be arrayed,
 And with triumph eternal
 Thy conflicts repaid.

“ Then, my soul, thou canst dare,
 Clad with firmness and grace,
 Present evil to bear,
 And e’en torture embrace :
 Hope and ardor shall blend
 In each glance of the eyes,
 As those steps I ascend
 Which conduct to the skies.”

All along the short course
 To his tragical end,
 With a guard in strong force,
 Fourteen drummers attend.
 Vain the efforts they make,
 With drums rolling around,
 His fixed purpose to shake
 Or his senses confound.

Thus the gallows he reaches
 His life to resign,
 And there humbly beseeches
 Assistance divine ;
 Then with courage transcendent
 His doom hastes to meet,
 And with angels resplendent
 His soul takes her seat.

Thus he finished his course,
 Nobly ended the fight ;
 Thus his soul sought the source
 Of celestial delight.
 'Twas a glorious fate :
 Now what raptures are thine !
 Thy triumph how great
 Where the martyr hosts shine !

Let us cease to complain,
 Each true protestant friend,
 Sobs of anguish restrain,
 Let our bitter grief end.
 Lubac needs not a tear ;
 No more foes to conspire,
 No more dangers to fear,
 Nothing left to desire.

His name let us prize,
 Be devoted as he,
 In soul let us rise
 His bright glory to see.
 And if God should ordain
 Us like suffering to bear,
 May we like faith maintain
 And his blessedness share.

It was a few months after the execution of Désubas that Paul Rabaut sent to the formidable Lenain an authentic and, as it were, official announcement of his pastoral ministration.

“ In devoting myself to the work of the ministry in this kingdom,” he writes, “ I was not ignorant of the consequences I incurred, and regarded

myself as a victim devoted to death. No human consideration could have induced me to adopt such a course. I believed that in undertaking the work of a pastor, I should accomplish the greatest good of which I was capable. Ignorance is the death of the soul and the source of an infinity of crimes. The Protestants, deprived of the free exercise of their religion, believing that they ought not to attend the services of the Romish Church, and unable to obtain the books which they need for instruction, judge, my Lord, what would be their condition if they were absolutely destitute of pastors. They would be ignorant of their most essential duties; they would fall either into fanaticism, the fruitful source of extravagances and disorders, or into indifference and contempt of all religion. Your Lordship is not ignorant that the ministry of the pastors obviates in a great measure these inconveniences; as to my own, I have neglected nothing for the sound instruction of those who have been confided to my care. I have especially endeavoured, after having established the fundamental truths of religion, to enforce the important duties of morality. I have preached sermons expressly on obedience and fidelity to the sovereign. It is true the Protestants have suffered much in various provinces of the kingdom, either in their own persons or those of their children, or in their property, and this may give reason to fear that

the exhortations of the pastors may not have all the success that could be desired.”

VIII.

If the Parliament* of Montpellier redoubled its severity, that of Grenoble followed in its steps with fanatic emulation. During the short space of two years (1745 and 1746), this court inflicted a number of cruel punishments. Paul Achard, Etienne Arnaud, Pierre and Antoine Bérard, Jean Faure, Louis Noir, and a multitude of other Protestants were condemned to the galleys for life. By the judgment of May, 1745, twenty-one accused persons; by the judgment of the 28th of September and the 15th of October, thirty-four; by that of the 6th of November, thirty-one; by that of the 22nd of April, the following year, a hundred and forty-five; and by that of the 23rd of September, forty-four;—were condemned, some to the galleys for life, others to minor penalties. The punishments were various. Porte was sentenced to the carcan or iron collar and to banishment, Lambert to the torture, ordinary and extraordinary. The barns and other buildings of

* The reader will recollect that parliaments in France were superior courts of justice rather than legislative assemblies.—*Trans.*

Isnard, Payan, Pialla, Chirol, Galand and some others, were demolished and rased to their foundations. A great number of women were consigned to the executioner, to be beaten with rods till the blood flowed, in the public squares of Grenoble. Other women had their hair shaved off and were shut up in houses of correction.

No class was exempt from these iniquitious judgments. The sentence of the 6th of November condemned thirty-one gentlemen of noble station, some to the galleys for life, all to fines and degradation from their rank. With these ignominious penalties, sentences of capital punishment were also mingled. The minister Duperron was condemned to death, and, having escaped, was executed in effigy at Grenoble.

The following year the same parliament condemned to death seven ministers or candidates (*proposants*): * Vouland, Descours, Dunoyer, Roland, Dubuisson, Alexandre Rang, and Paul Favre. They all, by concealing themselves, escaped the sentence ; but one of their colleagues, Louis Rang (or Ranc), was hanged in the town of Die, and his body dragged through the streets, given over to

* The term *proposant*, in the French Reformed Churches, was applied to a theological student in the later years of his preparation for the ministry. The proposants were already discharging some of the duties of that office : they occasionally preached, assisted pastors who were overburdened, &c., but they could not administer baptism and the Lord's Supper till they had received imposition of hands.

the vilest outrages, and thrown into a sewer by order of the military commander of the province and the Grand Vicar of the Bishop.

While Louis Rang was in prison he received several letters of encouragement from one of his associates in the ministry, the venerable Jacques Roger, who was then seventy years of age. "Poor boy," he wrote to Rang (hardly twenty-six years old), "I would I were in thy place!" This wish was only too soon granted. Two months after the execution of Rang, the aged Pastor Roger was delivered up by a traitor, and seized in a wood near Crest. He replied to the officer who, as a matter of form, asked his name: "I am he whom you have been searching for these thirty-nine years; it is time you found me." Being transferred to Grenoble, he was there condemned to death by the following sentence:—"The court declares the said Roger, duly convicted of having exercised the functions of preacher in the assemblies of the religionists, and in various places in this province, in expiation of which it condemns him to be delivered to the executioner to be hanged by the neck till he is dead." After the execution of the aged man, whose white hair inspired respect and compassion in the spectators, his body remained twenty-four hours suspended to the gibbet, and was afterwards dragged to the river which served for its tomb. Such was the end of the venerable Pastor Roger, whose evangelical labours had

commenced in 1708, that is, even before those of Antoine Court, and had continued from that time during nearly forty years. The memory of Pastor Roger was long dear to all the churches of Dauphiny, the faithful members of which, though bereaved of such a guide, increased in zeal even in face of the augmented severities of the Parliament of Grenoble.

Soon after these events, the new Governor of Languedoc, the Viscount de St. Priest, received and endeavoured to execute the order to compel the re-baptizing by the priests of the children of Protestants throughout the country.

Accordingly, at Nismes and other places, in 1751, he assembled the principal citizens, and enjoined them to bring their children to the parish churches in the course of a fortnight, in default of which they were to be punished with all the rigor of the laws. The Protestants refused compliance with this order, because the parish priests, who exacted a promise that the children should be brought up in the Romish faith, treated the baptized persons as relapsed,* and caused them to

* The laws concerning the *relapsed* were dreadfully severe. It will be sufficient to mention that if one who was considered a member of the Romish Church was taken ill, and refused in that state the religious help of the priest, he was condemned, in case of recovery, to the galleys for life, and to the confiscation of all his property: in the event of death, his body was to be drawn on a hurdle through the streets, and the fragments of it afterwards thrown into the common sewer.

be punished accordingly if they did not remain Catholics, the clergy having adopted the following maxim: "The Church has full power over those who have received baptism, just as the King has absolute right over the coin stamped at his mint." St. Priest pronounced the most terrible threatenings against the refractory. The oppressed people were appalled. They left their houses, fields, workshops, manufactories, and sought refuge in woods and caves.

The Governor was irritated, and wrote to one of his delegates thus: "They deceive themselves if they hope that the King will change his mind, or that I shall neglect to execute the precise orders which His Majesty has given me on this matter." But the desertion continued to increase, and St. Priest renewed the dragonnades by billeting-tickets thus conceived: "M. N., trooper of the military police, will remain quartered at the house of —, till he shall have taken his children to church to receive the rite of baptism by the parish priest; and he shall exact from him four livres (or francs) a day till the order has been obeyed, apprising him that the force shall be increased."

A commanding officer, named Pontual, proclaimed in the streets of Cayla: "Let no one deceive himself; all the Huguenots shall obey or perish, even if I perish myself!" The soldiers, assisted by some of the Catholics, and often accompanied by the priests of the place, beat up

the country for children, laid hands on them as criminals, and dragged them to church.

“There were some,” says Antoine Court, “of fourteen, twelve, and even ten years of age who would not allow themselves to be led to church, and whom it was necessary to drag by force; others filled the air with heart-rending cries; some threw themselves like lions on those who came to seize them, tearing their skin and clothes with their hands; others, having no better way of expressing their resentment, turned into ridicule the ceremony which was about to be performed upon them. And in this manner, in the midst of these brutal and ignoble scenes, baptism was by force administered!”

Having completed the re-baptizing at Cayla, the commander, Pontual, whose zeal was quickened by the perquisites he received for the capture of children, continued his expeditions throughout the district of Vaunage, along the shore, and in the plains, quartering soldiers in the houses of the absent or refractory, to the number of fifteen or twenty, who broke, plundered, and demolished every thing.

The Court of Versailles, rejoicing to see so many children re-baptized, ordered that the work should be carried into the mountains.

Notwithstanding these odious persecutions, and others still more cruel, the Catholic clergy were not satisfied, and they frequently made complaints

of the weakness of the governors and the laxity of the pursuit. The Bishops of Agen and Alais among others distinguished themselves by the importunity of their remonstrances. A magistrate, Rippert, the Marquis of Montclar, Attorney-General of the Parliament of Aix, who, though a Catholic, was scandalised at this unmerciful intolerance, replied to the clergy in a memorial, which soon became celebrated, and from which we cite one of the most striking passages, proving that the persecutions called for by the Bishop of Alais would be ineffectual.

“If,” says he, “an exact list were to be given that prelate of all the Protestants who have been put to death; of all the persons of every age and station who have been sent to the galleys; of all the taxes, fines, and other contributions which have been levied; of all the children who have been torn from their parents; of all the marriages which have been dissolved and declared immoral; of all the persons who have been imprisoned and detained in a long captivity; of all the excesses even, and the frightful murders committed by the King’s troops, and contrary to the intentions of His Majesty, alas! the list would fill entire volumes. Every corner of France resounds with the cries of these unfortunate people; they awaken compassion in those who glory, I do not say in being Christians, but in being men, yet a Bishop is insensible to them, and even seeks to redouble

them ! Would it not become him better, after having planted and watered on their behalf, to weep for them ‘between the porch and the altar?’”

IX.

Paul Rabaut meanwhile continued to travel through the country and to hold the assemblies of the Desert. On the 30th of January, 1752, (he was then thirty-four years old), in returning from one of these meetings he was surprised and arrested by some dragoons, with a young man named Bénézet, a candidate for the ministry, (*proposant*). The lieutenant who commanded the small troop, fearing he should not be able to carry off both the prisoners in safety, determined to release one of them, and, not suspecting the importance of his capture, set Rabaut free. Bénézet was conducted to Montpellier, and there condemned and hanged in circumstances similar to those of Désubas. He also was twenty-six years of age. He left a young child, and his wife about to give birth to another.

Taken almost at the same time and in the same vicinity, another Pastor of the Desert, Molines, closed his course very differently : on his history we must pause for a moment. The reader will not have forgotten that passage in Saurin’s noble

sermon : “ Groans of captives, pastors in tears, virgins outraged, solemn feasts interrupted, sanctuaries deserted, *apostates*, martyrs, scenes of blood and cries of anguish,—let the long catalogue of woes touch the heart of this assembly.” In Molines we meet with one of these unhappy apostates. Terrified by the preparations for the execution of Bénézet, he abjured, and thus obtained life and liberty. Before long, however, he was tormented by remorse, and life became a burden to him. He fled to Holland where, after proofs of repentance and a public abjuration, he was re-admitted into the communion of the church. The son of one of the pastors of Amsterdam has left us the following narration, containing his personal recollections on this subject.

“ Even to extreme old age M. Molines could never forgive himself for not having imitated Bénézet. Through his whole life he was conscience-smitten ; he was continually returning to this idea : ‘ Why could not I give my life for my Saviour,—for Him who laid down his own for my salvation ? ’

“ When very young I remember having seen M. Molines come many and many a time to my father’s house, always accusing himself, while my father endeavoured to convince him that by the infinite merits of Christ his pardon was without doubt granted, and that he might hope for salvation as any other repenting sinner. Being

advanced in years, he was afflicted with deafness, which obliged my father to address his consolations to him in a loud voice. The countenance of this unhappy man, furrowed with wrinkles, bore the impress of despair; but there might be discovered in it the faint vestiges of what had formerly been a noble and dignified physiognomy. His eyes, dimmed with tears, attested how much he had suffered; one could not meet them without being touched with pity; his attitude betokened depression; his head, falling with all its weight on his breast, and his listless hands, evinced deep discouragement; his careless dress testified to his oblivion of external things; all his person, in a word, proved that he counted himself no longer among the living. He was indeed maintained by some charitable individuals who had agreed to provide for his support.

“He never came to our house and silently seated himself, waiting till my father, for the hundredth time, should repeat to him words of consolation, without my experiencing a kind of terror mingled with childish curiosity: I described round him a semi-circle as large as the room permitted, and yet did not lose sight of him for an instant. He was so absorbed in himself that he did not perceive what passed; nothing could distract him from his sad thoughts; above all, he could not forget the last look cast upon him by Bénézet; and when he was a prey to this recollection his

sighs redoubled, as he thought with regret of the crown of martyrdom lost by his cowardice and attained by his friend. Thirty years of repentance appeared to him not long enough to weep for that which he called his unpardonable crime.

“One day however an idea occurred to him which seemed to bring some consolation. He asked my father if it would not be possible for him to obtain permission from the Consistory to ascend for once and the last time that pulpit which he had so profaned. M. Châtelain expressed some doubts; nevertheless he did not refuse to present his request before the competent authority.

“The Elders of the church, with the presiding Ministers, decided that the request of M. Molines might be granted, on condition however that he should not preach in a church. My father placed at his disposal a large summer-house at the bottom of the garden adjoining his residence. It was perhaps the only occasion when the profoundly sad countenance of Molines was lighted up by a ray, if not of happiness, at least of satisfaction. When it was publicly known that such a discourse was to be delivered, the desire to be admitted was extreme. The greatest solemnity characterized the service of the evening. It is easy to imagine the subject chosen by M. Molines. The repentance of St. Peter, from the striking analogy which he found between his own fault and that of the apostle, appeared to him the only topic suitable to his situation.

“The discourse produced a most powerful effect : the composition, the delivery, the affecting and almost terrible application, constituted such a soul-stirring appeal as was never effaced from the minds of the hearers.

“M. Molines lived only a few years after this day so memorable to him. On his dying bed, my father administered consolation to this penitent sinner, and now succeeded in persuading him to receive it with the full confidence of forgiveness, in which he had not been able to believe before, and which he accepted with feelings of humility and gratitude, that from this moment formed to him the commencement of eternal happiness.”

X.

After the death of Bénézet, the Protestants imagined that if their real situation were known to the King he would be moved to compassion for them. It was a great mistake. Louis XV. would not tolerate the Reformed Religion in his dominions any more than Louis XIV. Besides, the petitions of the persecuted people rarely and with difficulty reached the Court. With such an object in view, Rabaut at this time courageously exposed himself. On the 19th of September, 1752, as the Marquis de Paulmy d'Argenson, the Minister of War, was

making an official inspection of the country, Paul Rabaut, who still had a price set on his head, issued from one of his hiding-places and advanced alone on the road along which d'Argenson was to pass. On his approach Rabaut boldly introduced himself and presented a petition. The General, who by a word or gesture might have consigned the proscribed Pastor to the gallows, respectfully uncovered his head, and promised to deliver his petition. It would seem that he kept his word, as this document was afterwards found, with many others which had preceded it, in the archives of the state.

After this incident, Rabaut resumed his wandering life, continuing to preside in the assemblies, which were often dispersed by force. A new method was now tried to compel him to leave the country. An armed force entered the dwelling of his family during the night and endeavoured to terrify his wife, at that time left in charge of the education of their two eldest sons, and having in addition the care of her aged and infirm mother. It was signified to Madeleine Gaydan that she would not enjoy the slightest security or repose for herself or her family so long as her husband continued to exercise his ministry at Nismes and in the province. The Governor, by whose order this was done, hoped that the young woman, from love to her children and her mother, would solicit Rabaut to leave the country for a time. The

attempt was repeatedly made, but it was fruitless; Madeleine was one of those women who, far from fettering or retarding the activity of their husbands by the counsels of human prudence, have the power to fortify and encourage them in their devotedness. She persuaded the Pastor of the Desert to remain and continue his work. She wandered about herself for two years without a settled home, along with her infirm mother and her two children; received and concealed by friends whom she soon quitted, for fear of compromising them, to resort to others with whom she could not make a longer stay. During these two years the firmness of this heroic woman was immovable, and at the end of that time her persecutors were wearied of this unworthy method of annoyance. May the courage, perseverance and devotedness of this Christian woman be an example to us, and may her memory long diffuse among us its salutary influence!

On the first of January, 1756, an assembly of the Desert was surprised in the environs of Nismes. The greater part of those who composed it escaped by flight, but several were made prisoners by the soldiers, some of whom belonged to the best commercial families of Nismes; and among them was the venerable Fabre, aged seventy-eight. His son, who had succeeded in making his escape, came back again and entreated the officer in command to take him, a young and vigorous man,

instead of his father who, old and infirm, would not be able to endure the prison, the chain and the severe labours of the galleys. Jean Fabre, such was the name of this generous son, had just been betrothed to a young relative to whom he had long been attached. After a protracted combat of generosity between the father and the son, the officer, touched by the supplications and the tears of Jean Fabre, thought he might venture to permit the exchange.* This act of filial devotion made some stir, and the Duke de Mirepoix, Governor of the province, offered to restore the voluntary captive to liberty if Paul Rabaut would engage to leave the kingdom; but Fabre refused the liberty which was offered him at that price, and did not hesitate to make for the church to which he belonged the same sacrifice which he had already made for his venerable father. "It is our Pastor's duty," said he, "to concern himself with public calamities before thinking of those which may overwhelm individuals; he ought not to abandon his post till his Divine Master, Jesus Christ, shall command him." Rabaut, being also of this opinion, refused to depart, and Jean Fabre was conducted to the galleys at Toulon, clothed in

* In similar circumstances, young Bazeire, of the neighbourhood of Clairac, had been less fortunate some months previously. The entreaties which he addressed to the dragoons who had arrested his aged father, irritated those ferocious men, and one of them shot him on the spot.

the livery of crime, and confounded with the vilest offenders. Touched by his generous self-devotion, the naval officers stationed there were anxious to alleviate his condition, but the Count de Saint-Florentin, a most worthy minister of Louis XV., irritated at the respect paid to the virtuous convict, issued the most rigorous orders and required that he should be subjected to the ordinary treatment.

The celebrated author Marmontel, having in one of his works pointed out this instance of filial devotion as a subject for the stage, Fenouillot de Falbaire composed from it a play entitled, "The Virtuous Criminal." (*"L'Honnête Criminel."*) This drama, which was in five acts and in verse, met with great success and contributed in its measure to circulate some ideas of toleration among the frivolous society of the eighteenth century. When the Duke de Choiseul became minister, Jean Fabre was liberated, after a detention of six years in the galleys. On arriving at Nismes he again met his aged father, now eighty-four years old, who died of joy in the excitement of being able once more to embrace his son. It was not till some years after, that Jean Fabre was able to espouse his betrothed, in consequence of the iniquitous laws which obstructed the regular celebration of protestant marriages.

XI.

But to return to our history. In February, 1756, less than two months after the meeting at which Fabre had been seized, we again find Rabaut presiding over an assembly of the Desert for the ordination of seven candidates for the sacred ministry, lately arrived from Lausanne, where they had just completed their studies. A select number of pastors and elders had examined them, and been satisfied with their theological knowledge. We may observe in passing that on several occasions the synods of the Desert addressed letters of thanks to the conductors of the Academy.

Let us briefly explain what those assemblies of the Desert were, of which mention is so often made in the history of the French Reformed Church in the eighteenth century. They were generally held in lonely and uncultivated places, in caverns, in woods, in deserted quarries or in the midst of wild heaths. Those who were to be present were not summoned till the evening before, in order to avoid too much publicity. One remarkable trait in the character of the churches appears in the fact that not to be apprised of the holding of one of these meetings, which could only be attended at the peril of life, constituted a church penalty; it was inflicted on those who had scandalized their brethren by some serious offence.

It was necessary to take the most minute precautions for the security of these assemblies; sentinels were placed all round at various distances, and particularly on hills or rocks from whence an extended view could be obtained: if a troop of soldiers appeared, signals were immediately made to indicate their approach and the direction of their march, in order that the congregation might disperse and thus, by a prompt and well directed flight, escape enemies who were ceaselessly occupied in searching for new victims. As soon as a certain number of the faithful were collected, they began worship by singing a psalm, generally the hundredth:

“ Vous qui sur la terre habitez,
Chantez à haute voix, chantez ;
Réjouissez-vous au Seigneur
Par un saint hymne à son honneur.

“ Entrez dans son temple aujourd’hui,
Venez vous présenter à Lui ;
Célébrez son nom glorieux,
Et l’élevez jusques aux cieux.”

“ Ye nations round the earth rejoice
Before the Lord, your sovereign King,
Serve Him with cheerful heart and voice,
With all your tongues his glory sing.

“ Enter his gates with songs of joy,
With praises to his courts repair ;
And make it your divine employ
To pay your thanks and honours there.”

(*Watts's Version.*)

After singing, the Elders read the Holy Scriptures, often at considerable length. The officiating Pastor then arrived, having been previously concealed in some sequestered habitation in the neighbourhood. He was often surrounded by a number of young men prepared to protect him in his flight on the first signal of the approach of the soldiery. It must be recollected that the penalty of death was pronounced against every protestant minister taken in the exercise of his functions. The preaching, so necessary at a time when protestant religious books were an object of most minute pursuit, was not to continue more than an hour and a quarter. This limit, which would doubtless exceed the measure of attention from the greater part of protestant congregations at present, had been fixed by a synod, in order that the congregations might not be too long exposed to the danger of being discovered.*

* In answer to an enquiry made respecting these services, the Author has kindly supplied the following additional information :

“Public prayer always bore an important part in the assemblies of the Desert, either conducted by the Ministers or, in their absence, by the Elders. In the latter case a liturgy was more frequently employed than extempore prayer. At Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, the Lord’s Supper was celebrated, as well as on other occasions. It is worthy of remark that during the second half of the eighteenth century no one was admitted to that ordinance in the churches of the Desert, without having previously expressed to a Pastor or an Elder the desire to communicate, and received from him a kind of medal called *merreau* or *marreau*, which was placed on the table at the time of receiving the bread and wine. This

We should like to be able to give an idea, by some extracts at least, of the character of Paul Rabaut's preaching, but those of his sermons which have been preserved are yet unpublished, and we must confine ourselves to transcribing the estimate given of them by the author of the "History of the Churches of the Desert," who had read several of the sermons of this celebrated Pastor :

"In the style of Paul Rabaut's preaching," says M. Ch. Coquerel, "the same qualities may be recognised as in his correspondence on the affairs of the Desert. Much simplicity and unction; more of sweetness than vehemence; little of a controversial character; more of loving earnestness than profound argument; dogmatic exposition always sustained by practical admonitions: such are the distinctive merits of these discourses. He rarely treated of the subjects of dispute with the Romish Church. He preached doctrines in the spirit and words of the Gospel, without adding to them, without wandering into details or losing

medal, made of lead, in general but roughly engraved, represented, on one side an open Bible receiving rays from the sun, emblematic of the light of the Holy Spirit, and presenting to the eye those words so adapted to encourage a poor and persecuted church, "Fear not, little flock;" and on the other side, either a shepherd calling his sheep, or a communion cup and a cross, suggestive of persecution. The custom of using these medals gradually ceased in the nineteenth century. In a small number of churches they were retained so late as 1821 and even 1826. It was a mark of the discipline formerly maintained in the Reformed Churches of France, a discipline which has now quite fallen into disuse.

himself in deductions. Such is the distinct and deliberate impression which has been left by many of his discourses. As regards the form, they are all very methodical; they are remarkable for their logical perspicuity of arrangement. The same quality is observable in some other discourses of this period which we have examined, and which are distinguished either for their energy or for the perfect clearness of their views."

For the sake of illustration we will cite a fragment of a sermon in the Desert, which was preached about this time (on the 5th of October 1752) at the ordination of two young candidates for the ministry, one of whom had seen his own elder brother executed on the scaffold a little before by order of the Parliament of Grenoble.

This discourse, delivered in a retired cavern of Vivarais by the Pastor Peyrot, recounted to the young ministers the perils which awaited them in the Desert. Peyrot had chosen for his text the words in Matthew x. 16, only too appropriate to the deplorable circumstances of the churches and their pastors: "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves."

"Nothing more certain,—we can declare it in the face of heaven and earth, we are 'as sheep in the midst of wolves.' Let the nation in the midst of which we live boast its politeness and humanity, it is not the less cruel to us and athirst for our blood. Let its priests call themselves successors

of the blessed apostles who were of a character so pacific, let them affect an external gentleness and a horror of blood and slaughter, we cannot trust ourselves to them.

“What mean those fears amidst which we celebrate this ceremony,—those precautions we have been obliged to take;—even the place in which we are assembled on this solemn occasion? What! without a temple, exposed to the annoyances of the open air, obliged to flee human habitations to hide ourselves in woods, in frightful deserts! Do not these wild haunts cry to us that we must regard ourselves among men as sheep in the midst of wolves, since we are obliged to shun them with so much care? What mean those sanguinary plots which are continually being formed for our discovery and seizure? What mean, not the thirty pieces of silver, but the large sums of money promised to the Judases who may betray and deliver us up? Are not these so many voices crying to us, You are as sheep in the midst of wolves? What mean those troops of soldiers by whom we are surrounded on all sides, always armed, always ready to march against us? What mean those edicts which proscribe our religion and condemn all who teach it to the punishment of criminals? What mean those corpses pierced with bullets, those gibbets stained with blood? What mean, oh lamentable atrocity! those dear sheep torn in pieces, those venerable pastors mas-

sacred? I pause. It is only too certain we are as sheep in the midst of wolves What then is required of us? You feel it! a sacred trust is committed to you; you must maintain it. A crown is placed over your head, you must let no man take it from you.” *

“Doubtless,” adds M. Ch. Coquerel, “it would be difficult to find literary merit in this passage, at once severe and touching, to which the circumstances of the times, and the situation, must have given so powerful an effect. In appreciating it, we must not forget how few favourable opportunities for acquiring the beautiful language of France were possessed by these men of the Desert, who received all their education during two or three years’ residence in a *Swiss* academy, and on leaving it entered immediately upon a course of most perilous duties.”

XII.

Six months later, another meeting was held on the banks of the Gardon, for the ordination of three new candidates for the ministry from the Academy at Lausanne. By eight o’clock in the morning, between eight and ten thousand people

* For a specimen of Paul Rabaut’s preaching, see Appendix.

had assembled and were singing a psalm, when a small force of fifteen soldiers unexpectedly appeared. On pointing their muskets at the immense congregation it immediately dispersed, but the soldiers, not satisfied with this result, fired and killed several persons. If we reflect on the assurance with which fifteen soldiers fired thus at close quarters on some thousands of people, more than half of whom were doubtless men, we see how far the authorities counted on the non-resistance of the persecuted Protestants. The synods had indeed expressly enjoined this course, and Rabaut had on more than one occasion refused to officiate in assemblies to which some young men had come armed, for the purpose, as they alleged, of defending the old men, women and children, in case of surprise. His conduct in this respect having been called in question, Rabaut had appealed to Antoine Court, his former master and his friend, who wrote from Lausanne to sustain and encourage him in his decision. "Continue," said he, "to act thus; carefully avoid those places where the same thing might happen again, but omit no means of gently bringing back those who have been led into ideas so contrary to the Gospel." On this point they were both in accordance with the advice given by Calvin himself to the churches of France two centuries before. "I have heard," he wrote to them in 1556, "that many are resolved, if they are attacked, rather to resist such

violence than to let themselves be plundered. I entreat you, dear brethren, turn away from such counsels which God will never prosper because He does not approve them.” In this, as in many other things, the French Protestants followed the example of the primitive Christians, one of whose most illustrious teachers could say to the pagans: “When you would compel us to disobey God, you find us lions; but when you would punish us, you find us only lambs.”

In the present instance, several persons had been killed and a greater number wounded, either by the firing of the soldiers or the precipitation of a tumultuous flight. The soldiers reloaded and were preparing again to fire, when a number of young men faced about and protected the retreat of the congregation, menacing the soldiers, and some of them even throwing stones. The occurrence made a great noise on account of this shadow of resistance, and Rabaut consequently addressed a memorial to the Governor of the province, in which, without justifying those who had been wanting in patience and submission, he endeavoured at least to apologize for them. He set forth the grievances of the Protestants and shewed the danger of a new emigration. “They love the King,” said he, “they are attached to their country, they contribute to the utmost of their power to the prosperity of the state. But if they continue to be treated as wild beasts, can any

one blame them for seeking other climes where they will be treated as human beings?”

This memorial produced extreme irritation against its author, and from that time the search after him was prosecuted with redoubled vigour. He baffled every pursuit, taking refuge sometimes in almost inaccessible hiding-places, in which, however, he could not remain long. He frequently changed his costume and name, and rarely slept many nights following in the same habitation, as the houses that received him were often discovered, in which case they were surrounded and ransacked with the most minute vigilance. It was at this period of his life that he passed some time in a sort of but partly hollowed out of the ground and covered with stones and bushes: this sepulchral dwelling, situated in the midst of an uncultivated district, served him as a retreat at night and even as a study, till a shepherd, leading his flock over the heath, lighted one day upon the little cave and denounced it to the police. Rabaut regretted this wild abode as if he had enjoyed in it all the comforts of life. He was never apprehended, though often in extreme danger; sometimes he escaped from his persecutors by the speed of a horse which he used to facilitate his extensive circuits. Frequently also, in the journeys which the habitual exercise of his ministry required, he was preceded, followed and surrounded by devoted young men, who warned him by their signals and

accompanied him in those parts where he was likely to encounter the greatest perils. Thus lived and laboured, during a large portion of his life, a man of whom it may be said that for nearly forty years he was night and day in presence of the gallows; the firm and persevering, meek and patient servant of the Master to whom he had consecrated his being; the courageous Christian who knew how to unite the most indomitable energy with the greatest moderation; never ceasing to expose himself for the benefit of the church, and continually preaching entire submission to the government in all things except matters of conscience. How noble is the union of heroism and simplicity in this remarkable man! the attachment of this servant of God to his mission and his duty! Our admiration increases when we see the extreme modesty with which he himself appreciates his labours. In October, 1755, he wrote thus to one of his friends in Switzerland (he was then thirty-seven years old): "Forgive, my dear Sir and honoured friend, a silence which it has not been in my power to avoid. Pressed by a multitude of occupations, the day is not long enough for my work, and a good part of the night is often employed in it; but I seize with pleasure a moment of relaxation to reply to the obliging letter with which you have favoured me.

"You are aware, Sir, that fame magnifies objects; it has done so with respect to me. The

less I think myself deserving of the character in which I have been represented to you, the more strenuously I shall endeavour to realise it. If divine grace has given me some little love and zeal for religion, some desire to be useful to my brethren, it is indeed necessary that these motives should be as lively and effective as possible. When I fix my attention on the divine fire for the salvation of souls which burned, I will not say in Jesus Christ and his Apostles, but in our Reformers and their immediate successors, it seems to me that we are but as ice in comparison with them. Their vast labours astonish me and cover me with confusion. How I should like to resemble them in all for which they are to be commended! The praises which you give me, by showing me what I ought to do, stimulate me powerfully to spare no effort to accomplish it. Be so good as to add to this encouragement the help of your counsels, your exhortations and your prayers."

To complete the picture of Paul Rabaut, and to give a just estimate of his Christian zeal, it must be added that at the very time when he was carrying on his ministry amid so much danger, and when a price was set upon his head, he sent his two elder sons to the Academy at Lausanne to be prepared for that daily martyrdom which he was himself enduring for the service of Jesus Christ.

XIII.

In 1762, we behold a new scaffold erected at Toulouse ; new martyrs are to pay for their attachment to the Gospel with their blood, and Paul Rabaut will take an active part on behalf of the victims by seeking to move the great and powerful in their favour.

The young Pastor Rochette, after having carried on his ministry a year and eight months in the province of Quercy, of which Montauban was the capital, and taken the spiritual oversight of twenty-five churches of the Desert, was exhausted with fatigue and obliged to take some repose. With this view, he repaired to the mineral waters near St. Antonin. On his journey he was requested to turn a little out of his way to administer the rite of baptism in a secluded habitation. The guide who was conducting him by circuitous paths from Montauban to his destination, had gone to fetch another guide to lead him to the place where the service was to be performed. About midnight, as these two men were on their way to join the Pastor, they were met on the high-road by a cake-woman who was going to the neighbouring little town of Caussade. The two guides, seeing some one approach and fearing lest they should be discovered, turned out of the road and

made a small circuit in the fields; this was sufficient to suggest to the woman that she had met some suspicious persons, and on arriving at Causade she gave notice to the police. The authorities of the town consequently sent out a patrol of the civic militia, who soon overtook the two guides having now with them a horseman who was no other than Rochette. Their replies appearing embarrassed, they were taken to Caussade and examined by the municipal authorities. Rochette having stated that he was a protestant minister, the magistrates, influenced by motives of humanity, invited him to retract the declaration which might prove fatal to him. But Rochette replied that, having spoken the truth, he could not alter his first statement. Subsequently his academic diploma was found upon him and was made use of at his trial. It was signed Antoine Court, Polier de Bottens. Lausanne. October, 1759.

On the day following, a fair was held at Causade. The news of the arrest of Rochette caused some tumult among the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood, very many of whom were Protestants. The authorities, being alarmed, sounded the tocsin, assembled the militia, and committed to prison a number of Protestants, in particular three brothers, young men of rank named de Grenier: they belonged to one of those families which had been ennobled by a predecessor of Louis XIV. for having introduced into France

the manufacture of glass, and they were called on that account nobles of the glass trade, (*gentils-hommes verriers*). These three young men were accused, but without proof, of having intended to deliver the captive minister by arms. Some weeks after the Parliament of Toulouse took cognizance of the affair; it was the death of Rochette and the glass manufacturers.

The churches were in consternation; and Rabaut, forgetting the dangers of his wandering life and ordinary ministry, made the most strenuous efforts on behalf of the prisoners. He drew up a petition on their account to Madame Adelaide, the eldest daughter of Louis XV. who, amidst the dissipation of a selfish and voluptuous court, had distinguished herself by her benevolence, purity of manners and elevation of character. "One of the greatest advantages of your illustrious birth and of your high rank," said he to this princess, "is the power of assisting the unfortunate. It is well-known, Madame, that you take pleasure in making this noble use of your influence, and that many sufferers have experienced the effects of your powerful intercession. This emboldens me to write to Your Royal Highness. What I propose to you, Madame, the favour which I ask, is to rescue from the scaffold, not a malefactor, but a worthy man, a protestant minister named Rochette, who will soon be condemned to death unless Your Royal Highness obtain his pardon.

It is just, it is necessary that the disturbers of society should be punished,—not those who contribute to promote piety, peace and subordination. It is a well-known fact that these ministers have extinguished fanaticism by their sound instructions. By exercising their functions in the kingdom, they have preserved to His Majesty a great number of subjects, who would otherwise have left the country to secure elsewhere the worship with which they cannot dispense.”

Unfortunately no trace of the effect of this letter can be discovered ; perhaps it never even reached the person who ought to have received it. The noble princess to whom it was addressed emigrated in 1791, and retired to Rome, which she was obliged to leave on the approach of the French army, in 1799. She died soon after, still in exile.

Rabaut also addressed himself, but in vain, to the Maréchal Duc de Richelieu and to the Duc de Fitz-James, both then in great credit at court. He wrote to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who was at that time living in the Hermitage in the Valley of Montmorency. Two years previously, Rousseau had published “*La Nouvelle Heloise*,” and he was then occupied with the “*Emile*.” We give his answer to the entreaties with which Rabaut urged him to use his influence in favour of Rochette and the three young nobles.

“Montmorency, October 24th, 1761.

“I learn from your letter, with mingled grief and indignation, the outrages which our unhappy brethren are suffering in your part of the country, at which I am the more surprised as it would be, in my opinion, the interest of the government to leave them now at least in peace. I am well aware that the fanatics who oppress them consult their own sanguinary temper far more than the interests of government; yet I find it difficult to believe that they would proceed to this pitch of cruelty if the conduct of our brethren had not given some pretext for it. I feel how hard it is to be continually at the mercy of a cruel population, without help, without resource, and without even the consolation of hearing the Word of God in peace. Yet, Sir, that same Word of God is express on the duty of obeying the laws of princes. The power of prohibiting public assemblies is incontestably among their rights; and, after all, these assemblies not being essential to Christianity, a man may abstain from them without renouncing his faith. He who would be a Christian must learn in the first place to suffer, and every one ought to maintain a course of conduct consistent with his principles.

“These objections may be bad, still, if they were made to me I do not see clearly what I should have to reply. . . . Besides, Sir, by an indiscreet zeal I should only injure the cause I

attempted to aid. The friends of truth are not welcome in courts, and ought not to expect to be so. Every one to his vocation in the world ; mine is to tell the public unpleasant but useful truths ; I endeavour to accomplish it without troubling myself about the mischief bad men wish me, and which they do me when they can. I have preached humanity, gentleness, tolerance, as much as lay in my power ; it is not my fault if I have not been listened to ; for the rest I make it a rule always to confine myself to general truths : I write neither libels nor satires ; I attack not a man, but men ; not an act, but a vice. I cannot, Sir, go farther.

“ I see by your letter that you have, like me, learnt to suffer in the school of poverty. Alas ! it makes us compassionate the misfortunes of others, but puts it out of our power to relieve them. Farewell, Sir. I am yours very truly.”

XIV.

After having knocked in vain at every door, nothing remained but for the prisoners to submit to the justice of the Parliament of Toulouse. Rochette was condemned to the gibbet ; the brothers de Grenier, as nobles, to decapitation ; Viguiier, one of the guides, to ten years of the galleys, and

Viala, the other, to six years. Whatever apprehensions the fanatic rigour of the Parliament might have justly inspired, the churches were far from expecting this thunderbolt. It seemed incredible, especially barbarous in regard to the glass manufacturers, of whose guilt no legal proof had been produced. They were condemned on a mere suspicion.

“Well,” exclaimed the martyrs, when on the following morning their sentence was read to them in prison, “we must then die! Let us ask God to accept the sacrifice we present to Him!” The minister offered a prayer, “very touching,” say the accounts; they then embraced their companions who were sentenced to the galleys, and congratulated those who were to be restored to liberty. The four leading priests of the town came in and offered them life if they would change their religion; Rochette thanked them for their solicitude, and entreated them not to trouble their last moments. One of the priests threatened them with perdition. “We are going,” replied the Pastor, “to appear before a Judge more just than you, even before Him who shed his blood to save us.” The priests interrupted him, and when they spoke of heresy and of the power of the Church of Rome to absolve from sin, the minister in his turn interrupted them, and told them that the protestant religion was founded on Scripture, and that sins were only forgiven by faith in the death of the Redeemer.

At noon the priests retired, leaving the martyrs to take their last meal ; but, as they had now no further need to sustain this mortal life, they only thought of giving to their souls the mystic feast of exhortations, prayers and hymns, the aliments of immortality. Their calm and pious rapture touched the jailers and the soldiers ; but when the captives thanked them for their good offices, and begged them to forgive any involuntary wrongs, the guards melted into tears. One of them particularly appeared much moved. "My friend," said Rochette to him, "are not you ready to die for your King? Why then do you grieve at our dying for God?"

An hour after, the priests returned. The martyrs entreated them to retire. "But it is for your salvation that we are here!" said one of the priests. Lourmade replied: "If you were at Geneva, about to die in your bed, for there no one is put to death on account of religion, would you like four ministers, on pretence of zeal, to come and persecute you till your last breath? Do not then to others that which you would not wish to have done to you." And as the priests pursued them with the crucifix: "Speak to us," cried Coumel, "of Him who died for our offences and rose again for our justification, and we are ready to listen to you, but do not mingle your superstitions with it."

At two o'clock the martyrs left the cells of the

Provincial Prison. The priests took their seats with them in the fatal car. A Captain in a red robe at the head of the city horse guards, a Commissioner of the Parliament in a black robe, both appointed to be present at the infliction of the sentence, formed, with the executioner, the funeral procession. By the terms of the writ, the minister was barefoot, stripped of his outer garments, and with a rope round his neck, having according to the sentence a label on the breast and the back, inscribed with these words: "*Minister of the Pretended Reformed Religion.*" But the de Greniers were clothed with severe elegance for this festival of death. Before the front of the cathedral the car stopped. The minister, fearing that it was intended to force him to abjure before the altar, refused to descend. The Commissioner told him that it was to make the "amende honorable," to ask pardon of God, of the King and of justice, for having violated the laws. "You see then," replied he, "that I was not quite mistaken; that would be to abjure my faith." "It is only a form," returned the Commissioner. "I know nothing of forms against my conscience," replied the minister. He was however forced to descend from the car. He knelt down and said: "I implore pardon of God for all my sins, and I firmly believe that I am cleansed from them by the blood of Jesus Christ who has ransomed us at so great a price. I have no pardon to ask of the King. I have

always honoured him as the anointed of the Lord; I have always loved him as the father of my country. I have always been a good and faithful subject, and of this my judges appeared to me to be convinced. I have always preached to my flock patience, obedience and submission, and my sermons, which are in the hands of the public, are summed up in these words: 'Fear God, honour the King.' If I have transgressed the laws respecting religious assemblies, it is because God has commanded me to transgress them; as to justice, I have not offended against it, and I pray God to pardon my judges." After vehement remonstrances, the clerk and the executioner were obliged to be satisfied with this confession.

The funeral car proceeded towards the scaffold. An immense multitude thronged the path of the procession, invading the fatal spot, the neighbouring windows, the balconies, the roofs; nothing could be seen but masses of heads. The fanatical populace, whose clamour but lately had called for the blood of Calas, forgot their ferocity at the sight of these confessors, who doubtless seemed to them very young to die. Rochette was twenty-six years old, Coumel thirty-four, Sarradon thirty-two, Lourmade only twenty-two. The de Greniers were tall and handsome; gentleness and dignity mingled in their aspect. On the face of the minister, full of grace and serenity, shone a rapture as

if welcoming death. They conversed aloud respecting the things of heaven, and that better life to which they were about to ascend. Their discourse drew tears and sobs from the crowd. Rochette, exhorting his companions, fulfilled to the end his duties as pastor. He blessed them for the last time, and then mounted the ladder, singing the following hymn :

“ Là voici l’heureuse journée
 Qui répond à notre désir !
 Louons Dieu, qui nous l’a donnée,
 Faisons-en tout notre plaisir.
 Grand Dieu ! c’est à toi que je crie :
 Garde ton Oint et le soutiens.
 Grand Dieu ! c’est toi seul que je prie :
 Bénis ton peuple et le maintiens ”

Ps. cxviii. 24, 25.

Thus imitated in English :

“ At length the glad day has arisen
 So longed for and dear to our sight ;
 Let us praise God by whom it is given,
 And let us rejoice in its light.
 Mighty God, unto Thee do I cry,
 Thine Anointed to guard and sustain ;
 Thee alone I invoke, O Most High,
 Thy people to bless and maintain.”

The executioner conjured him to die a Catholic. The minister replied, “ Judge which is the better religion, that which persecutes or that which is

persecuted.” He also said that one of his uncles and his grandfather had died for the Gospel, and that he should be the third martyr in his family.

Of the three de Greniers, the two elder witnessed the execution of the minister without the least emotion, but the youngest hid his face in his hands, sobbing. They then embraced each other and commended their souls to God.

Coumel was beheaded first; Sarradon next; when it came to the turn of the young Lourmade, the executioner said to him compassionately: “See the fate of your brothers! . . . do not die! . . . abjure!” The martyr, bending over the bloody block, answered him, “Do your duty!”

Thus perished these young and heroic confessors. Their death spread universal grief through the churches, and their funeral orations resounded amidst the lamentations of the people, from all the pulpits of the Desert.

It was the 26th of February, 1762, and Rochette was the last martyred minister of the Desert.

Part the Third.

THE TRIAL OF CALAS AND THE PART WHICH RABAUT TAKES IN IT—THE PROTESTANT GALLEY-SLAVES—THE PRISONERS IN THE TOWER OF CONSTANCE — MARIE DURAND AND HER CORRESPONDENCE WITH RABAUT—THE CONSISTORY OF NISMES GRANTS TO PAUL RABAUT AN UNLIMITED RECESS—THE EDICT OF TOLERATION IN 1787, AND THE COMPLAINTS OF THE CATHOLIC CLERGY RESPECTING IT—RABAUT-ST. ETIENNE ADVOCATES RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY—HE IS GUILLOTINED — OLD AGE AND DEATH OF PAUL RABAUT.

“I beheld, and lo ! a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ; and cried with a loud voice, saying : Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And one of the elders answered saying unto me : What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they ? And I said unto him : Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me : These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in his temple ; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” REV. vii. 9, 10, 13—17.

NOBLE and sacred army of martyrs how have your ranks been recruited from the Reformed Churches of France ! O may these thousands and thousands of victims immolated for the faith, but now singing the immortal song of praise to the Lord, live for ever in our

recollection ! Let us piously cherish their memory, and let the example of their self-renunciation, of their courageous fidelity, revive the fervour of our hearts and renew the vigour of our Christianity.

XV.

The execution of Rochette and the three noble glass manufacturers made a great sensation among the Reformed Churches of that period. Numerous letters were addressed to Rabaut on the subject. “We see,” wrote a pastor of Dauphiny to him, “that in spite of the corruption of the age and the decay of zeal, there are still Christians of piety as stedfast as can be found even in the first ages of the church. The edifying death of that illustrious confessor has more in it to strengthen believers than all the sermons he could have preached during a long ministry.” The churches hastened to adopt the family of Rochette, which was in great straits; and considerable sums were devoted to the payment of this sacred debt.

Of the correspondence of the Pastors of the Desert with Rabaut, a touching incident must be preserved. The execution of Rochette and the three de Greniers had cooled the charity of many wealthy Protestants in Béarn towards the poor of

the Catholic faith. They insisted on this amongst other reasons for their conduct, that the renewal of persecution should induce them to concentrate their pecuniary aid on the needy of their own Church. The worthy and evangelical Pastor Fosse declared that he would refute with all possible gentleness this evil spirit of recrimination, so opposed to the love of Jesus Christ towards all men. "I gladly have recourse," he writes to Paul Rabaut, "to the authority of your counsels and the line of conduct you maintain towards the necessitous Catholics of your district, to dissipate these unhappy doubts."

But public attention was soon diverted from this event to one if possible still more tragical, and with which Rabaut was more intimately connected; I mean the Calas affair, the report of which spread far and wide. I cannot here enter into details; that interesting and affecting story ought to be fully treated by itself. I shall only speak of it in its connexion with the history of Rabaut.*

Jean Calas, a respectable merchant at Toulouse, had among other children a son named Marc-Antoine. This young man who was of a melan-

* All the important details of this affair may be found in a recent very interesting and complete work: "Jean Calas et sa Famille," a History compiled from Original Documents, by Athanase Coquerel, Junior, Pastor. Paris. One vol., 12mo. of 540 pages. Cherbuliez.

choly disposition, untoward temper, and without strength of character, had committed suicide one evening by hanging himself at a door of his father's warehouse. The family were Protestants, and rumour, in the fanatical city of Toulouse, speedily accused them of the murder of this son and brother, who it was said, but without any proof being adduced, was on the point of abjuring heresy. To give greater weight to this popular rumour, Marc-Antoine Calas was buried with all the pomp of the Romish Church, as if he had been a martyr for the Catholic faith. Some days after the funeral, the monks of the Order of White Penitents performed a splendid service for the soul of the martyr in their chapel. The whole church was hung with white, and, in order to produce the greatest impression possible, a structure representing a tomb was erected in the centre of the building, on the top of which was made to stand a skeleton, hired from a surgeon for the purpose. The name of the deceased was inscribed at the foot of the hideous figure, which held in its right hand a palm, the emblem of martyrdom, and in the other the inscription in large letters: "Abjuration of Heresy."

After a trial unprecedented in its general tenor and in all its details, Jean Calas was condemned, on the 9th of March, 1762, to be subjected to the question ordinary and extraordinary, and to be broken alive on the wheel and then thrown into

the flames. He was executed three weeks after Rochette and the de Greniers; his goods were confiscated, and his children banished or shut up in a convent by *lettres de cachet*. But three years afterwards, in consequence of the generous and persevering efforts of Voltaire and other distinguished men, the process was revised by the Council of State. The Judges who decided this important cause were forty in number. Among them were fourteen Governors of Provinces. They examined the affair with the greatest minuteness in six long sittings, and the former judgment was reversed by a unanimous vote. The memory of Calas was cleared, and his property restored to his children.

The *monitoire*, a kind of indictment of the Attorney-General, designed to be read in all the churches, had affirmed that protestant parents were obliged by their religion to put their children to death when the latter manifested an intention to pass over to Roman Catholicism. This accusation, received by the multitude as authentic truth, had exasperated the people of Toulouse and even influenced some of the judges. In many cases it was doubtless only a pretext, but in others it really formed a ground of violent indignation: hence the terrible importance of this hateful calumny, in its bearing on the Protestants throughout France, may be easily imagined.

Much pains was taken to dissipate the false

ideas circulated on this subject by the indefatigable enemies of the Protestants. The Advocate of Calas even procured an official declaration from the body of Pastors and Professors of the Church and College of Geneva, stating that "no assembly or synod had ever countenanced the abominable doctrine that a father might take away the life of his children, to prevent their changing their religion, or to punish them for it; . . . that neither Calvin nor any other theologian of the Reformed Religion had ever taught such a doctrine, and that, far from its being a principle held by the protestant churches, it was unanimously detested and abhorred by them. . . ."

But it was not sufficient for foreign Protestants to contradict this falsehood; it was necessary for those of France to confute it themselves. Paul Rabaut published "*La Calomnie Confondue*," a memorial designed to enlighten the Courts of Justice and public opinion as to the odious charge made against his brethren. After having stated that the early Christians, and afterwards the Reformers of the sixteenth century, were objects of atrocious calumnies, he continues in these words: "We will not deny that to impute to us such horrors is to attack us in the most sensitive part. Let our enemies confiscate our property, let them send us to the galleys, let them suspend our ministers to the gibbet, but at least let them respect a system of morals which has no other author than

Jesus Christ himself. Let them punish us as bad reasoners, or as transgressors of those penal laws which we cannot obey without violating more august commands, but let them not accuse us of being unnatural fathers, and of being so in virtue of the maxims of a most holy religion.

“The fundamental principle of Protestants consists in recognising the Holy Scriptures as the only rule of faith and conduct; those Holy Scriptures in which assuredly no one learns to commit parricide. What Church is it which maintains most firmly that faith is the gift of God alone, that conscience is amenable solely to Him, that one man cannot believe at the will of another, that a blind faith is a dead faith, that every act of piety must be voluntary? It is ours. What Church is it which has most forbearance towards heretics, which carries civil toleration the farthest, and asserts that errors are to be combated only by the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God? This again is ours.

“Is it not the Protestants who have pleaded with most earnestness for liberty of faith and opinion? To accuse us then of a persecuting spirit is to attack us in our stronghold. It is generally considered among us that those who err from the truth are to be tolerated, that we are to honour the Deity and never avenge Him. We leave the punishment of heresies to God, to whom alone it belongs.

“The calumny circulated against us is also confuted by long experience. After the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, conversions to the Romish Church were only too numerous among us ; did any one ever hear that one of these converts was punished, that his conscience was forced, that his abjuration proved fatal to him ?

“Six months hence, when the passions of men are calmed, when their minds are no longer excited by popular rumours, when the Parliament, on which all Europe has its eyes fixed, has pronounced its sentence, men will blush at having opposed a real to an imaginary fanaticism.”

Rabaut's pamphlet roused the displeasure of the enemies of Protestantism : it was referred to the Parliament, who condemned it to be torn up and burned by the hangman on the Place du Palais, which was carried into execution. And as the court had decreed that proceedings should be instituted against those who had composed, written, printed and distributed the said libel, and every body knew who was the author, lively apprehensions for Paul Rabaut were felt both in France and in foreign countries ; and offers of an asylum, with means of subsistence, were made to him from various quarters. He received the most honourable and affectionate solicitations from Copenhagen, from Holland, from Geneva, and Lausanne, where he had numerous and faithful friends. But he was still in the prime of life, being scarcely

forty-five years of age, and he did not hesitate to refuse them all. He only found it necessary to use additional precautions for concealment.

XVI.

We should by no means give a complete idea of the age, and of the ministry of Rabaut, if we said nothing of the intercourse between the Pastor of the Desert and the Protestants consigned to the galleys and to prison for the sake of their religion. By great personal exertions, to which his lively sympathy for the sufferings of his brethren prompted him, Rabaut sought, in the midst of his own personal dangers and privations, to arouse the charity of the Protestants in France and Europe in favour of the poor galley-slaves, whose fate was truly terrible.

A short time after the Revocation, the galleys and the convict prison of Marseilles contained more than six hundred Protestants; there were nearly as many at Toulon. Dunkirk and other ports also contained a great number. Most of these were fugitives surprised and arrested in their attempted emigration. The high-ways were furrowed with long trains of these unfortunate people, who, from different provinces, were being dragged to this frightful captivity. On all the public roads

in the kingdom, says an historian, these unhappy convicts might be seen walking in large companies, with heavy chains round their necks, the most inconvenient that could be found being given them; many of these weighed more than fifty pounds. They were forced to travel by long stages, and when they fell down from weariness they were roused by blows of a stick. The bread given them to eat was coarse and unwholesome, and the avarice of their keepers did not allow them enough of that to support life. At the end of the day's march, they were lodged in the filthiest prisons, or in barns, where they lay on the ground without any covering or being relieved from the weight of their chains.

Some years ago, Admiral Baudin gave a description of the condition of the protestant galley-slaves in the eighteenth century, drawn from the best sources of information, while he was making a military inspection of the ports of Marseilles and Toulon. One circumstance which lends additional interest to the researches and communications of M. Baudin, is the fact that this superior officer of the French navy, who died a few years ago at Paris, a good Protestant and Christian, was born and educated in the Romish communion.

“The regulations of the galleys,” he says, “were then excessively severe. This fact explains the vast amount of mortality in proportion to the

numbers condemned. The convicts were chained in couples to the benches of the galleys, and they were employed in moving long and heavy oars, an exceedingly painful service. In the centre of each galley, between the benches of rowers, extended a kind of gallery on which the overseers constantly walked, having each as a whip the nerve of an ox, with which they struck the shoulders of the unfortunate men who did not row with sufficient energy to please them. The galley-slaves passed their lives on their benches; they ate and slept there, without being able to move farther than the length of their chain permitted, and having no other shelter from the rain and the heat of the sun, or the cold of the night, than a cloth which was stretched as an awning over them when the galley was not in motion and the wind was not too violent."

Add to this the hideous livery of the convicts, the red cloak, the shaving of the hair and eyebrows, the cork gag suspended round the neck; for in certain manœuvres all the convicts were gagged. And to such sufferings, to this horrible coupling with the vilest criminals, thousands of men were condemned whose only crime was their religious belief, their fidelity to a proscribed worship. Extreme youth and gray-headed age were mingled there, for on the benches of these hateful floating prisons were seen young lads of fifteen and octogenarians.

Among the latter, in 1753, was Isaac de Grenier de Lasterme, an ennobled glass manufacturer of Gabre, in Languedoc, sentenced to the galleys for life for attending religious meetings. Isaac de Lasterme was not the first nobleman clothed by his persecutors in the infamous garb of the galley-slave, witness the Baron de Salgas, the respected chief of one of the most ancient families of the Cevennes, condemned, in 1703, on a false accusation of holding communication with the Camisards. As for M. de Lasterme, his only crime was that he had been seen peaceably attending the meetings for worship, a common and trifling offence. In the condemnation of this septuagenarian, in 1746, virtue, rank, and gray hairs were all smitten at once. Like his predecessor at the galleys, the Baron de Salgas, he accepted his fate in the spirit of a Christian martyr.

“We see by your letter,” wrote M. de Lasterme to the Pastor of the Desert, who had been commissioned to convey to the sufferers at Toulon consolation and assistance from their brethren, “we see the concern you feel for the poor protestant captives. . . .” Our circumstances depend on those who are placed over us, and vary according to the caprice of their whimsical and ferocious tempers. You have had, Sir, a statement of the clothes which are given us, with which we have to endure the rigour of the cold and the heat of summer. Occupied in the labours of which you

have been informed, having no food but bread and water, we can only obtain any amelioration by paying a half-penny every morning to the keepers; without this we are liable to remain fastened to a beam by a heavy chain. If the honoured Society at Marseilles did not give two half-pence to each, the greater number of us would be subjected to this cruel punishment; there are many whose more pressing necessities oblige them to submit to it. I pray that the great God may crown the grace He has communicated to you with more grace; that He may sustain you in your labours and prosper the talents He has given you for the glory of His name. I have the honour to be, Sir, with all the respect which I owe to your character, your very humble and obedient servant, LASTERME. I beg you to pardon, at my age, the interlineations and other defects of writing."

Alms for the captives were collected not only in France but also in foreign countries, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland. The refugees who had found on a friendly soil peace, security, and religious liberty, did not forget their less fortunate brethren. The pulpits sent forth fervent prayers and eloquent appeals on behalf of the confessors suffering for the faith, and the lapse of time did not exhaust the charitable solicitude of their Christian brethren.

It was not till 1775, at the beginning of Louis

XVI.'s reign, that the galleys released their two last protestant prisoners, Antoine Rialle, a tailor, condemned for the offence of attending a religious meeting, and Paul Achard, for having concealed a minister from pursuit. These victims owed their deliverance to the active efforts of Court de Gébélin, the son of the illustrious Pastor Antoine Court. The learned author of "*Le Monde Primitif*" combined with his literary labours the functions of agent in Paris for the churches, and was thus able to render numerous and signal services to his fellow Protestants.

XVII.

But it was not *men* only who suffered for the persecuted Protestant Church. How many daughters were torn from their mothers! How many mothers torn from their children! Corresponding to the convict prisons of Marseilles and Toulon, stands the dismal Tower of Constance, with its unfortunate prisoners. There we shall find the same barbarity and the same courage.

Near Aigues-Mortes, and at a little distance from the Mediterranean, rises the massy fort called the Tower of Constance; it is 100 feet high and 200 feet in circumference. The interior forms two circular rooms, situated one above the other.

An opening in the centre of the floor forms a communication between the upper and lower apartment. The former has also an aperture in the ceiling issuing upon the platform of the tower. Besides these two openings for air, the two rooms are only lighted by narrow loop-holes, pierced through the vast thickness of the walls. It is just possible to read there when the eye has been accustomed to this funereal twilight. Here languished year after year unfortunate women who were nearly all apprehended, like the prisoners at the galleys, for the sole fact of being present at religious meetings.

We possess a list of twenty-five protestant women who were prisoners there in 1754. This list, written by one of the unfortunate inmates, who had herself been detained there twenty-four years, is in a handwriting trembling and ill-formed but still legible; we will give some of the particulars contained in it.

Anne Saliége, daughter of the late Antoine Saliége, a labouring man, of the diocese of Mende, seized in her house by order of the King, on account of religion; aged sixty-five years; in prison since 1719. (Her captivity had lasted thirty-five years.)

Marie Beraud, of the diocese of Viviers, blind from four years of age, seized in her house by order of the King, on account of religion; aged eighty years; a captive since 1727. (This poor

blind woman had been in prison twenty-seven years, having been confined there when fifty-three years of age.)

Madeleine Ninard, widow of Antoine Savanier, a master mason of the city of Nismes, seized for having attended a prayer meeting; sixty-five years old; a captive since 1739. She has four daughters. (Here then is a widow snatched away from her four daughters. Who took charge of these children thus doubly bereaved? Doubtless they were committed to some convent, in order to be taught to curse the religion of their mother.)

Anne Soleyrol, of the town of Alais, seized on a charge of having attended a prayer meeting. Removed to the convent of Mende; three years afterwards transferred to this Tower. (Young girls or women were sometimes first shut up in convents where they had to endure the solicitations of the Sisters. After they had resisted promises and threatenings, mildness and severity, which in certain cases went to the length of corporal punishment, when, in a word, they were judged obstinately incorrigible, they were put in prison for the remainder of their lives.)

Marie Durand, to whom we owe this list of prisoners, was the daughter of the deceased Etienne Durand, consular notary, and had been arrested in her house in connexion with the ministry of her brother, the Pastor Pierre Durand, executed at Montpellier the 22nd of April, 1732.

The youthful Marie had been imprisoned at the age of fifteen ; she left the Tower of Constance after thirty-eight years of captivity. This dismal habitation had received her while yet a child, and did not release her till her declining days, less aged indeed by years than by detention in that gloomy abode where nearly all her life had been passed.

The celebrated Boissy d'Anglas, who when quite young had seen the interior of this dismal prison, described it to his children thus : " I have seen that Tower of Constance which may well inspire you with lively interest : your mother's great-grandmother was shut up there when in a state of pregnancy, on the charge of having been to hear a sermon, and there gave birth to a daughter from whom you are descended. Truly I have seen nothing calculated to make so deep an impression on the memory. It was about 1763. I was hardly seven years old ; my mother wished to visit those unfortunate sufferers for our religion, and took me with her : more than twenty-five prisoners were still there. The prison was composed of two circular apartments, one above the other ; the lower one received light from the upper by a round opening about six feet in diameter. The second room was lighted by a similar opening in the terrace which formed the roof. Around each apartment numerous beds were ranged for the prisoners. The fire was made in

the centre, and the smoke could only escape by the same openings which served to admit air, and unfortunately wind and rain also. I saw that prisoner who was detained there thirty-eight years before the time of her release arrived. (Marie Durand.) The Dutch Government and the Swiss Cantons were in the habit of sending assistance every year to her and the other prisoners. She was a very pious woman, full of intelligence and good sense, on account of which the other prisoners held her in great respect, though many of them were older than herself, and the difference of age was the only circumstance to break the equality of that terrible place."

As Boissy d'Anglas remarked, Marie Durand, the daughter of a consular notary and sister of a minister, had enjoyed greater advantages of education than most of her companions in misfortune. She became, as it were, the agent, interpreter and secretary of the melancholy sisterhood. There exists a tolerably long correspondence which she carried on with Paul Rabaut, and in it may be found the reflection and echo as it were of her gloomy prison. By a singular contrast between the pitiless laws which still continued and the progress of opinion, it was permitted that Marie Durand should thus maintain communication with her Pastor, though he too was under a sentence of proscription still in force. We transcribe some passages from these letters :

“Sir and very dear Pastor in Jesus Christ,” she wrote to Paul Rabaut in February, 1760, “I am much gratified that you received my letter with pleasure. It is a great delight to me that my Pastor, whom I respect and love very cordially, should deign to attend to what his captive sheep says to him. This kindness consoles me and helps me to bear my sufferings with patience. . . . I am greatly obliged to you, Sir and very dear Pastor, for the pious exhortation you have had the goodness to send me; I will do my best to make use of it; continue to me, if you please, your protection and your dear pastoral friendship, which I value far more than all the treasures of the world.”

“I have the honour to inform you,” she wrote to Rabaut in 1762, “that many of my fellow-prisoners were obliged to run in debt in their illnesses last year, and that I was in the same condition. I must tell you in truth that then I owed twenty-five crowns. Now I do not owe so much, having paid fifty livres. But God knows what I have gone through for it! All the summer I have done without a gown, apron, shoes, and other necessary things; provided only I can get out of debt before leaving this cruel prison I shall be satisfied.” Two years later: “Sir, very dear and much honoured Pastor, it is to you we have recourse; it is to your pastoral kindness I apply for a remedy to prevent an infection which is likely

to spread among us. In the name of the divine mercy, use every possible effort to rescue us from our frightful sepulchre. We are in urgent need of all the help you can give. May God bless you, worthy Sir, and your amiable family ; may He protect you all and accomplish by your beloved hands the great work of His most desired peace, and grant me the blessing of the sweetest satisfaction I desire in this world, next to the peace of the church, the great pleasure of seeing you. My most respectful salutations to all who are dear to you ; may you and the talent you have received from Heaven live again in them for ever. Burn my letter if you please. Have the goodness to pray for us, particularly for our sick ; the health of nearly all of us is much affected."

At length, after so many years, the prisoner of the Tower of Constance was able to re-visit her early home, the house, which she found in ruins, the chestnut trees which shaded it, the scenes no detail of which had passed from her recollection. It is affecting to read the last letters of Marie Durand, in a feeble hand, but dated from her native village, whence she continued to write in the most touching manner to Paul Rabaut, her "much honoured Pastor and generous benefactor." She complained that his letters did not come more frequently ; "they are very necessary to me, but they are very rare ; be liberal of them I entreat

you.”* She feelingly thanked her foreign benefactors; she sent forty livres to poor Chambon, “her companion in persecution,” whose octogenarian arms had just been relieved from the chain of the galley-slave; he had left Toulon, after thirty years of captivity, about the same time that she had quitted the Tower of Aigues-Mortes. It is consolatory to know that these two aged persons were permitted at length to die in peace, in the profession of that faith for which they had so long suffered.

XVIII.

At this period ideas of tolerance were making rapid progress in the opinions and manners of

* It would be interesting to have some specimen of Rabaut's part in this correspondence, or that with M. de Lasterme referred to above, exhibiting a different side of his character from that of the courageous preacher and champion of the truth. Our Author has not had it in his power to present us with such extracts: we are enabled, however, to give a letter written on another occasion, which, though in a fragmentary state, bears testimony to a heart capable of deep feeling and strong sympathy. It is written to a Pastor in Geneva, but without date, on occasion of the death of two devoted friends of French Protestantism. The document gives also touching proof of the perpetual restraint and caution under which Rabaut's correspondence was carried on, lest, if intercepted, the mention of facts or names in connexion with himself or the churches might direct the researches of their persecutors. See Appendix, No. III.

society, preparing the way for the proclamation of religious liberty.

Paul Rabaut pursued his evangelical labours in the midst of fewer exterior obstacles, and he was seconded in them by his eldest son, Rabaut St. Etienne, who arrived from Lausanne in 1765, and was nominated Pastor at Nismes in the same year, at the age of twenty-two. His second son, Rabaut-Pommier, was Pastor first at Montpellier, and afterwards at Paris. The third, Rabaut-Dupuis or Rabaut-Jeune, was a merchant in his native town.

The condition of the Protestants now improved day by day. It was not, however, till 1780 that they obtained from the municipal authorities the use of a cemetery. They had long been obliged to bury their dead privately, either in the country, whither they transported by night the remains of those dear to them, or in their gardens, but always in secret. The greater part, in the towns at least, dug the graves of their family in their own cellars, and thus shielded the sacred relics of their children or their parents from the barbarous laws which still pursued them under the denomination of *relapsed*.

In 1785, Paul Rabaut, at the age of sixty-seven, requested and obtained from the Consistory of Nismes an unlimited recess from his pastoral labours, a relief which was become necessary, less on account of his years than his advancing in-

firmities. In fact, his life of agitation, privation, excessive fatigue, and incessant anxieties, had prematurely worn him out. In the sitting of the 6th of October, the Consistory of Nismes adopted the following statement and resolution, which do as much honour to the Church as to the Pastor of the Desert himself:

“Considering that, during the course of his long ministry, M. Paul Rabaut has not ceased to manifest the united wisdom, virtues and zeal of a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, as he is depicted by the Apostle St. Paul: ‘blameless, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, apt to teach, not violent, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous, having a good report of them that are without;’

“That in the stormy times through which the church of Nismes has passed, he has strengthened believers in the faith by his doctrine, maintained in patience and submission those whom the misfortunes of the times might have embittered, and inculcated on all the duties which the Gospel prescribes towards the sovereign and government established in the country ;

“That he has, in trying circumstances, shewn a firmness and immovable constancy truly christian, generously exposing his life to the most imminent perils for the welfare of his flock, so that he may be justly regarded as the apostle and restorer of the church of Nismes ;

“That to his pastoral virtues he has joined the qualities of a patriot and a citizen, healing divisions, reconciling diverse interests, promoting peace among all, and becoming the arbiter of differences even among our brethren the Roman Catholics ;

“That the knowledge of his moderate, wise and prudent character acquired by the representatives of the royal authority in this province, has earned for him their esteem and confidence, and not a little contributed to the toleration we now enjoy ;

“From all these considerations, the Consistory, wishing to testify to M. Paul Rabaut its just gratitude, veneration and love, and to place him in a position to take care of his health, which his labours have impaired, has unanimously resolved to grant him full and entire liberty in regard to the exercise of his ministerial functions, continuing to him notwithstanding during his life the same title, rights and income, he has hitherto enjoyed as Pastor of the church at Nismes.”

At this period Rabaut, with the funds produced by the sale of some property which had belonged to Madame Gaydan, his wife's mother, built a house for the shelter of his old age. Numbers of his grateful people contributed to the erection of this dwelling, and the street in which it stands is still called by all the inhabitants of the town, La Rue de M. Paul, notwithstanding the official name of Rue Gretry imposed upon it by the municipal

authorities. After the death of Rabaut, this house was purchased by a generous Protestant (who concealed his name) and given to the Society for Protestant Orphan Girls of the Department of Gard.

XIX.

In 1786, Rabaut St. Etienne received a visit from a young General already celebrated, the Marquis de Lafayette, lately returned from America. It appears beyond a doubt, from the correspondence of Lafayette with Washington, that the great man who founded the Republic of the United States, had solicited the French General, on his return to his country, to exert himself in favor of the unhappy Protestants. Lafayette heard St. Etienne preach in the Desert, and strongly urged him to go to Paris to plead the cause of his co-religionists. The Pastor yielded to these entreaties, and laboured for a year to obtain the Edict of 1787, which had been previously desired and even prepared by Malesherbes and some other liberal statesmen. This edict, which the Protestants received with lively gratitude, granted them nothing more than a civil status, or the regular registration of their marriages, births, and deaths. There was no mention made in it of their meet-

ings, nor of any thing which resembled liberty for their worship, or for the ministry of their pastors.

And yet this edict could not be published without raising numerous and importunate complaints from the Catholic clergy. This might have been expected. The clergy had caused Louis XVI. at his coronation to take the ancient oath to exterminate the heretics denounced by the Church, and Lomenie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, had said to the monarch: "Sire, you will reprobate the counsels of false peace, the principle of guilty tolerance. We entreat you, Sire, do not delay to deprive Error of the hope of having among us its temples and altars. . . . It is reserved for you to strike the last blow at Calvinism in your dominions. Order the dispersion of the schismatic assèmbles of the Protestants; exclude the sectarians without distinction from all offices of public administration, and you will secure among your subjects the unity of true Christian worship." Six years later, in 1780, the general assembly of the clergy presented to the King a long memorial on the attempts of the Protestants. It complained that Heresy was rending the heart of the Church, "that tender and afflicted mother;" and asked for a return to the salutary and repressive measures adopted in the good times of Louis XIV. "Formerly," said the priests, "the religionists were rigorously excluded from offices, public employ-

ments, and municipal posts ; now infringements of this rule are increasing. Formerly they held no religious meetings, now the holding of such meetings is notorious. Formerly they did not venture to dogmatize in public ; now every day is marked by some new insults cast upon our sacred rites and mysteries. It is our duty to confide our apprehensions to the religious and paternal heart of your Majesty. The source of the evil cannot be efficiently reached without the permanent expulsion of foreign preachers, and the adoption of measures to prevent natives of the country from ever in future thrusting themselves into the functions of pretended pastors."

Thus the exclusion of Protestants from all public offices, banishment of their pastors, dispersion of their assemblies, in a word, the execution of the most odious laws of Louis XIV. alone could satisfy the clergy. It is true that after having presented these requests, the prelates added : "Nevertheless the stray sheep are our fellow-men, our fellow-citizens, our brethren, and, in a religious sense, even our children. We will still love and cherish them. Far from us be a single thought of violence or bloodshed."

It is difficult to understand how the conclusion of this memorial could accord with the premises, since it was an impossibility, as shown by the experience of more than a century, to prevent a million and a half of Frenchmen from

exercising their worship, by any means short of extermination. "But," we add with M. de Felice, "we will not let a word of bitterness escape us here. We will, on the contrary, express our commiseration and our sympathy for these bishops and these priests. Alas! how many of them were destined to perish in the storms of the Revolution. Their misfortunes excite our pity!"

We cannot, however, be much surprised at the intolerant language of the Catholic clergy. The Church of Rome could not promote true religious liberty without contradicting herself, and disowning a past history intimately connected with the infallibility to which she lays claim. Gregory XIII. manifested the unchangeable spirit of the papacy by ordering a *Te Deum* to be chanted in thanksgiving for the news of the St. Bartholomew Massacre, by testifying in various ways the extreme joy which he felt at that abominable butchery, and by issuing the famous medal which bears on one side the head and name of the Pope, and on the other an angel holding in his left hand the cross, and in his right a drawn sword with which he has smitten and killed the men and women whose bodies strew the ground around him; and, lest the signification should not be understood, on the margin are inscribed the words: "*Ugonotorum strages*," Massacre of the Huguenots, 1572.

A century later, another Pope also sang a *Te*

Deum to celebrate the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and Bossuet, eloquently apologizing for the same Act of Revocation, exclaimed in his celebrated funeral oration for the Chancellor Letellier : “ Let us not fail to publish this miracle of our days ; let us hand down the history of it to future ages. Take your consecrated pens, you who write the annals of the church ; hasten to put Louis-le-Grand side by side with Constantine and Theodosius. Our fathers never saw, as we now see, an inveterate heresy suddenly destroyed ; the erring flocks returning in crowds, and our churches too small to receive them ; *their false pastors abandoning them without even waiting for the command, and happy to be able to allege their banishment as an excuse (!)*. All has been calm in this great movement ; the world has been astonished to see in an event so new a certain proof of the noblest use of power. Touched by so many marvels, let us pour out our hearts, let us raise our shouts to heaven, and let us say to this new Constantine, to this new Theodosius, to this new Marcian, to this new Charlemagne : ‘ You have established the faith ; you have exterminated the heretics ; *it is the greatest work of your reign ; it is its true characteristic !* By your exertions heresy is no more. God alone could have wrought this miracle.’”

On his return from Paris in 1788, St. Etienne preached at the promulgation of the Edict of

Toleration, a discourse from these words : “ Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things which are God’s.” This sermon, aided doubtless by the circumstances of its delivery, produced an astonishing effect on the ten or fifteen thousand hearers who crowded round the son of Paul Rabaut to receive the authentic assurance of the happy change in their situation, and to return thanks to God for this first step in the path of religious liberty. After a period of seventy years, comprising two or three generations, this festival day, and the sermon of Rabaut St. Etienne, are still talked of at Nismes.

XX.

We have now arrived at 1789, the year of the French Revolution. The city of Nismes, being called upon to elect eight deputies of the third estate, to represent it in that body which was soon to become the Constituent Assembly, nominated in the first rank, Rabaut St. Etienne; a remarkable event, if we look back a few years, and if we remember that the great majority of the population of Nismes were Romanists. There is reason to believe it was not without regret and apprehension that Paul Rabaut saw his son exchange even for a short time the functions of a

pastor for those of a legislator, and his desert pulpit for the tribune and the impassioned agitation of political assemblies. However this may be, it was not long before Rabaut St. Etienne distinguished himself on this new theatre of action by the elevation and justice of his views, and by his simple but powerful eloquence. Many of the speeches delivered by him in the Constituent Assembly are remarkable in thought and expression. We will merely cite some fragments of his speech on the 23rd of August, 1789, in which he urged the Assembly to proclaim liberty of worship: "The non-Catholics," said he, "received in the Edict of November, 1787, that which could not be refused them. Yes, I repeat, not without shame, that which could not be refused them; and this is not a gratuitous inculcation, for these are the very words of the Edict. That law, more celebrated than just, fixes the forms of registration for their births, marriages, and deaths; it therefore acknowledges them as subjects, and permits them to exercise their professions, but that is all. It is thus, gentlemen, that France in the eighteenth century has preserved the practice of barbarous times, by dividing the nation into a favoured and a disgraced caste. The Protestants are still excluded from many advantages of society; . . . proscribed for their thoughts, culpable for their opinions, they are deprived of the liberty of professing their religion; . . . in many provinces they are obliged

to celebrate their worship in the desert, to conceal themselves, like criminals, from the tyranny of the law, or rather to render the law ridiculous in its injustice, by continually eluding and violating it. But at length there exists a French nation, and it is to her I appeal on behalf of two millions of useful citizens who now demand their rights as Frenchmen. I will not do her the injustice of thinking that she can pronounce the word *Intolerance*; it is banished from our language, or it will only remain as one of those barbarous and obsolete words which are no longer used, because the idea they represent has passed into oblivion. But, gentlemen, it is not *Toleration* which I demand; it is *Liberty*. Toleration! Sufferance! Pardon! Clemency! Ideas supremely unjust in regard to the dissidents so long as it shall be true that difference in religion, difference of opinion, is not a crime. *Toleration*!—I ask that *it* shall be in turn proscribed, and it will be so—that unjust word which represents us only as citizens worthy of pity, or as culprits requiring pardon. Error is not crime: he who professes it takes it for truth; it is truth to him; he is under obligation to profess it, and no man, no society, has a right to forbid him. Ah! gentlemen, in that partition of errors and truths which men deal out or appropriate, where is he who would dare to assert that he is never deceived, that truth is always on his side and error always with others? I demand,

then, for French Protestants, for all the non-Catholics of the kingdom, that which you demand for yourselves,—liberty, equality of rights.” The victory was not doubtful. The instructions of the electors to the greater part of the deputies required the abrogation of the exceptional laws which affected the dissidents. On the 23rd of August, 1789, the Revolution was consummated, the work of Louis XIV. was shattered, and all Frenchmen were equally recognised as citizens.

The principles then advocated by Rabaut, as almost new, rapidly made their way; and fifteen years later the presidents of the protestant consistories, when assembled before the Emperor Napoleon I. on the day of his coronation at Paris, December the 12th, 1804, heard from the lips of that monarch the following words, which placed on a firm basis the new ideas and the rights which flowed from them: “I wish it to be known that it is my intention and firm determination to maintain liberty of worship: the empire of the law ends where the indefinite empire of conscience begins. Neither the law nor the prince has any power against that liberty. Such are my principles and those of the nation; and if any one of my family who may succeed me should forget the oath which I have taken and, misled by the suggestions of an ill-informed conscience, should violate it, I devote him to public animadversion,

and I authorize you to give him the name of Nero.”

On the 15th of March, 1790, the Constituent Assembly gave Rabaut St. Etienne a mark of their respect, and of the confidence they had in his talents and impartiality, by nominating him to the honourable post of President. The same day, writing to his father, he concluded his letter with these words: “The President of the National Assembly is at your feet.” What must have been Paul Rabaut’s feelings on reading these words! how forcibly his long remembrance of proscription must have risen before his mind, inciting to gratitude and thanksgiving!

The year 1792 was a happy one to the aged patriarch of the Desert. Religious liberty having been proclaimed, the consistory hired the church of the former Dominicans, or Preaching Friars, in the parish of Nismes, for the celebration of regular public worship. Paul Rabaut offered the dedication prayer, and closed the service by reading the song of Simeon, which, on account of his advanced age and infirmities, he applied to himself:

“ Laisse-moi désormais,
Seigneur, aller en paix;
Car, selon ta promesse,
Tu fais voir à mes yeux
Le salut glorieux
Que j’attendais sans cesse.”

Thus translated in "A Chapter on Liturgies,"
by the Rev. C. W. Baird.

"Now let thy servant, Lord,
At length depart in peace;
According to thy word,
My waiting soul release:
For Thou my longing eyes hast spared
To see thy saving grace declared."

Rabaut was then seventy-four years old; he had been Pastor at Nismes for forty-four years, and this was the first time he had seen his church assembled in a large and public edifice. No one, therefore, was surprised to see him shed tears of gratitude and joy on this solemn occasion. But he had yet more to suffer before entering into his rest.

XXI.

The years 1793 and 1794 were disastrous to Paul Rabaut as well as to all France. His two elder sons, members of the National Convention, had made themselves conspicuous by their opposition to Robespierre and the tyranny of the Sections. On the trial of the King, particularly, Rabaut St. Etienne declared with vehemence against the competence of the assembly. His

conduct on this occasion was full of energy and courage. "Yet one week," said he to his colleagues, "one week only, and the judgment of ages will begin to be pronounced upon you, when neither tardy reflection, nor vain regret, nor useless endeavours to retrace the past will be able to shield you from that weight of public opinion, the nature of which is to increase, to grow, and at length to overwhelm those who have accumulated it on their heads." Then, with a gesture of righteous indignation, he cried, "For myself, I acknowledge I am tired of my share of despotism; I am wearied, harassed, tormented by the tyranny in which I bear a part, and I long for the time when you shall have formed a national tribunal which shall rid me of the manners and countenance of a tyrant." All his efforts were useless.

When the competence of the assembly had been admitted, and the King declared guilty, he disputed, step by step, with his adversaries every slightest chance of safety; he voted for the appeal to the people, and after the rejection of that proposition he joined those who, to the number of two hundred and eighty, demanded the King's detention in custody and banishment on the conclusion of peace. The majority of the Convention rendered homage to his conduct by calling him, on the 23rd of January, 1793, to the presidential chair, as successor to Vergniand.

It was not long, however, before the two

Rabauts were proscribed for their political opinions. St. Etienne was condemned to death with the great party of the Girondins, with which his principles had identified him : a writ was also issued for the arrest of Rabaut Pommier ; both however were enabled by flight to elude the execution of the decrees against them, and found an asylum in a house of the Faubourg Poissonniere, belonging to one of their fellow-citizens of Nismes, a generous Roman Catholic, to whom their father had formerly had an opportunity of rendering some service. But the carpenter who constructed the hiding place where they were secreted had the imprudence, or the baseness, to speak of this mysterious closet before Fabre d'Eglantine, the too celebrated secretary of Danton, who hastened to denounce the fact to the police. A domiciliary visit was made, at first without result ; the officers were about to leave the very room where the presence of the two captives was so skilfully concealed, when the sound of a repeating watch, made to strike the hours without being touched by the hand, betrayed the place of their retreat. They were immediately arrested. Rabaut Pommier was committed to the Conciergerie, where he was forgotten till the death of Robespierre, an event which opened the doors of his prison. But St. Etienne, who had been outlawed, died the next day upon the scaffold. Such was the early and tragical fate of a man whose whole life had been

animated by the desire of helping the unfortunate and pleading the cause of all that were oppressed.

And now churches and temples were involved in one common hatred to give place to the worship of Reason, and were all closed, that of the Protestants of Nismes like the rest. By the same decree of a representative of the Terrorist party, all Priests and Protestant Ministers were commanded to remove within a week to a distance of twenty leagues from their churches, on pain of being considered suspected persons. Paul Rabaut, not having removed from his church, was dragged to prison. As his infirmities did not allow of his walking he was taken on an ass to the citadel, amidst the insults of the mob. During his youth and his mature age, he had been persecuted, tracked from place to place, menaced with death a thousand times by the despotism of an absolute monarchy ; and now, in his enfeebled old age, we see him the butt of the persecutions and outrages of another despotism quite as hateful as the former, that of the lawless multitude. He had known before the violence of superstition, he now experienced that of impiety. After some months, however, in consequence of a sudden change of parties in the capital, he was restored to liberty.

He had suffered much while in prison. The death of his eldest son had been a sore affliction ;

he had been for some time a widower and infirm ; his second son was in the Conciergerie ; the third was in exile, having emigrated during the reign of Terror. After returning to his desolated home and putting his affairs in order, he collected his soul before his God and entered into rest, by a death simple as his life had been ; that is to say firm and assured, though without any remarkable or striking utterances ; by one of those peaceful but silent deaths which have terminated the career of many eminent servants of God. He had passed seventy-seven years on earth, the greater part of which were years of agitation, of forced concealment from the tyranny of persecution.

On viewing the close of such a life, to which no funeral oration can do justice, we will only cite the words of the sacred writer : " Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours and their works do follow them."

After the fatigue and hardship so long endured in the service of Jesus Christ, with what joy would he hear those words : " Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord !"

We can add no reflections to this narrative. It speaks sufficiently by itself of faith, of charity, of patience, of courage, of obedience to duty, of devotedness to God.

In this career of self-renunciation, what an

amount of good did one man accomplish during the fifty years of his active ministry !

May we all learn from the example now set before us afresh, to be ever faithful to the truth, courageous and persevering in well-doing, strong in that calm energy which alone is durable, and which only can accomplish things truly great.

APPENDIX.



APPENDIX.

No. I.

THE following account is derived from a periodical published at Lausanne.* It is probably a sample of many affecting family histories, which the events following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes might furnish, could their details be fully known. The interest of the narrative will form an apology for its insertion.

One of the most considerable families in Languedoc during the seventeenth century was that of the Marquis de Rochegude, connected with the noble house of Barjac. At the time of the persecution, the eldest son of the old Marquis was arrested by order of the King, Louis XIV., in the Chateau of Rochegude, and exiled to Viviers (Ardèche), where he had to contend with the missionaries who vainly endeavoured to convert him to Popery. Irritated by his firm resistance to all their arguments, his adversaries sought other means of conversion. He was thrown into prison at Aigues-Mortes, in the Tower of Constance, afterwards noted as the place of custody for so many Protestant women. His health soon failing from his residence in that melancholy abode, he was transferred to the citadel of Montpellier, and subsequently to the prison of Pierre-Cise, where it

* "Le Chrétien Evangélique au XIXme Siècle," edited by the Author of the "Trois Séances," in conjunction with another minister of the Free Church of the Canton de Vaud.

seemed likely he would remain for life, as that provincial bastille was then appropriated to prisoners of state.

This rigorous captivity, which he bore with noble fortitude and Christian fidelity, was further embittered by anxiety respecting his family, of whose fate he was ignorant. His two sons were in the hands of the Jesuits at Beaucaire, his two young daughters had been taken away from their mother and placed in a convent at Bagnols (Gard), and his wife had been obliged to flee to the mountains and conceal herself in the garb of a shepherdess. His brother, Jacques de Rochegude, to whom we are indebted for this narrative, was with the army in Alsace, serving under General Monclar, who endeavoured, by the allurements of promotion, to induce him to change his religion. Having failed in this attempt, the General received an order to arrest him in the following terms: "The King gives to such and such persons a pension of 1000 livres and the assurance of the first vacant regiment. But as to de Rochegude, who persists in his obstinacy, the King commands you to send him to prison at Landscroon till further orders."

"I am ready to obey;" replied the brave officer, with the chivalrous loyalty of his order; "to prison and to death if the King so wills: the King is master!"

Being conducted to Landscroon by a strong escort, the prisoner was the next day confronted with some monks whom he dismissed, he tells us, with very few words: "'Gentlemen,' said I, 'I know your religion and mine: I am here to suffer and not to dispute: retire, you have nothing to do with me.' I have always found it well to be frank with people of that sort, and to deprive them at once of all hope."

Three months after, Jacques de Rochegude was removed to Fort St. André, near Salins, and consigned by the Commander La Barthe to a dark prison, where he was ill lodged and poorly fed. Among other hard-

ships, he states that he was not allowed to be shaved for fourteen months, at the end of which time a pair of scissors was given him for the purpose, and taken away a few days after. But God had prepared a precious solace for the worst period of his captivity. Three gentlemen of Poitou, like himself, steadfast confessors of the truth, having been transferred from the prisons of Pierre-Cise to Fort St. André, were placed in an apartment adjoining that of de Rochegude, and divided from it only by a plaster partition. Hardly had they entered their cell when these faithful disciples of Jesus began to sing joyfully the 34th Psalm.

“Jamais ne cesserai
De magnifier le Seigneur.”

“I will never cease to magnify the Lord.”

“This song,” says the narrator, “was to me a sweet melody, a balm that rejoiced and strengthened my heart. My joy was still greater when, on tapping the wall, these brave soldiers of the cross approached.

“‘Gentlemen,’ said I, ‘you are of the Religion; you may be known by your language.’

“‘Yes,’ said they, ‘by the grace of God.’

“‘And I also, by the same grace,’ I replied. They asked my name.

“‘What,’ said they, ‘are you the brother of the Marquis de Rochegude whom we have left in Pierre-Cise?’

“‘He is my brother.’ My heart was overwhelmed with the tidings.

“‘He gave us, at hazard, a letter for you, not knowing where you were.’

“They pushed it through the plaster. I knew the writing at once. O ineffable goodness! O God, how many are thy marvellous kindnesses to me! This letter was a great comfort to me, and the manner in which it

was brought made me admire how Providence finds means of uniting, even through prison walls, those who seemed to be for ever separated."

This was not the only benefit that de Rochegude received from his neighbours. As they were permitted to prepare their own porridge, they managed to convey through the wall by a tube what the poor prisoner, so ill fed by his jailer, called an excellent soup. "They were," he gratefully says, his "nursing fathers" till his release from prison. This took place in consequence of a royal order, which was rather remarkable. "The King commands that the prisoners who have not changed (their religion) shall be set free, and those detained in custody who, after having changed, have been taken in the act of leaving the kingdom." On which de Rochegude makes this very just reflection: "Their design in changing was to avoid a prison, and by that very change they have brought upon themselves imprisonment and many other troubles. There is nothing in such cases but to do one's duty and leave the event to God."

As the liberated captive was on the point of departure, the Commander, La Barthe, with some confusion, endeavoured to make excuses for the manner in which he had treated him. "I have forgotten every thing, Sir," replied de Rochegude, "both names and things. Believe that if I had an opportunity of doing you a service, I should do it as heartily as I say so. His counterfeit humility, after his haughty airs, called to my mind that beautiful expression of Scripture, (for the Scripture must needs be fulfilled,) 'Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies be found liars unto thee.'" (Ps. lxvi. 3. Martin's Version.)

Leaving St. André, in consequence of this order of the King, "or rather of the King of Kings," observes the pious narrator, "for it was the work of God," de Rochegude and his three fellow-prisoners were con-

ducted to Verrières, on the frontier of Switzerland, where the police officer left them. From thence our traveller proceeded to the Pays de Vaud. On arriving at Morges he observed in the street a man on horseback, on whom his eyes were instantly fixed: it was his own brother, released like himself by the royal mandate from his prison at Pierre-Cise. "He recognised me," says the happy de Rochegude, "stopped, and instantly dismounted. We embraced one another tenderly, each saying, 'By the grace of God I am come out, giving glory to Him.' What was our joy at that meeting! It cannot be described. To what St. Paul said of the sufferings of the present time, that they 'are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed,' may be added, with the joys which they give in the present time, even in the midst of the greatest sufferings for Christ. These joys are so great that they must have been felt to be understood; those who feel them not understand nothing that is said of them, and those who feel them know more than can be told. They are inexpressible."

Another happy meeting awaited the elder brother. His wife, who had been discovered under her rustic disguise soon after the arrest of her husband, had been consigned to a convent at Nismes. There too her fidelity to the Gospel had led to her deliverance. As the Bishop came one day to visit the nuns, the Abbess said to him, "Take away that lady, or she will make all the convent huguenot." The remark had a happier effect for Madame de Rochegude than the Abbess doubtless intended. An order soon after came to set her at liberty, and she was transported in a litter to Geneva. From thence she proceeded to Vevey, where she had the great delight of meeting her husband, and they rejoiced and thanked God together that they had each come out by the right door, that is, without having quailed before persecution. Madame de Rochegude,

like her husband and brother, had been released in one of those rare intervals when the severity of Louis XIV. somewhat abated, and he allowed the penalty of imprisonment to be changed into exile in the case of those whom it was impossible to constrain or allure to a recantation of their faith.

But the re-united husband and wife were not without causes of bitter sorrow and anxiety. Their four children were left behind, in that furnace of affliction and temptation the horrors of which they so well knew, and their faith had long to wait for complete deliverance.

When the two sons had completed their studies under the tuition of the Jesuits, they returned to the family seat at Rochegude, and their parents found means of communicating with them through the medium of friends. It was some time however before their letters produced the effect desired. The young men felt strongly the attractions of the world on first leaving college. At length, without venturing to inform his brother of the important step he was taking, the younger son left for Switzerland and joined his parents. But they were soon after called to mourn over his early death, though they were enabled to rejoice that this son, "whom they had a second time begotten," had exchanged the earthly asylum of the protestant exile for the eternal refuge in the bosom of his Saviour. Charles, the elder son, though touched by this event, still remained in France, hesitating between heaven and earth. Young, handsome, affluent, flattered by those in power, who sought to retain him by the prospect of military rank and an advantageous matrimonial connection, he was surrounded by very dangerous seductions. Grace however conquered: the prayers of his father and mother were heard and answered. Breaking loose from all the bonds which detained him, young de Rochegude one day set out, without a passport, to join his parents and, leaving all his wealth and worldly

prospects behind him, cast in his lot with the people of God in poverty and exile. We may imagine the sacred joy and thankfulness with which the parental arms embraced this son also, receiving him as a brand plucked out of the fire.

But the family circle was not yet complete. Two daughters were still detained in the convent at Bagnols, where they continued fourteen years before their deliverance could be accomplished. Snatched from a mother's care at a very early age, the poor children could only have communication with their parents by means of a devoted friend, who managed this secret intercourse for them without exciting suspicion. We again borrow from their uncle's narrative.

"The Abbess permitted them now and then to go and see a near relative in the town, but not without putting them under the care of an attendant, whom she ordered by no means to leave them, and to bring them back speedily. One day, when the Abbess was in the parlour much occupied, they came to ask permission to go and see their relative. The Abbess happily forgot at the moment to send for a person to take charge of them. 'Go,' said she, 'and take your attendant.' They lost not a moment in equipping themselves, and fled to their faithful friend, who immediately set out with them in a return carriage to Nismes. On arriving there they went, without letting the muleteer know, to the house of a lady who had a great affection for their family, and who received them with joy. They remained concealed at her house all the next day. The Abbess, however, alarmed at their continued absence, made enquiry for them in the town, and, finding that they had taken the road to Nismes, sent a messenger that very night to the Bishop to inform him of what had happened. The prelate caused a domiciliary search to be made, and the house in which they were staying was visited. The lady, without being disconcerted, had

all the doors set open, at the same time giving a secret order that the young ladies should go down into a well near the house, which was dry and shallow. They entered, and the well was closed up with four planks. The elder, seeing a toad at the bottom of the well, said, 'Ah, Sister, there is a bad omen.' The other, treading on the creature, replied, 'Well, Sister, there is the omen averted.' This is mentioned as showing the courage of the two girls. After the official visitors had left, they were brought out of the well, and the next morning were sent off on horseback under the care of a trusty guide, dressed as peasants, in company with the young lady who had so well directed them. They proceeded safely to Geneva; from thence to Vevey, to their father's house, without making themselves known. The mother was the first to recognise her younger daughter. 'There is our dear child!' said she to her husband, in a transport of joy. 'Here is the other!' added the elder, throwing herself on her mother's neck. They embraced each other without speaking: great joys like great sorrows admit of few words. All the town flocked to the house to testify their share in our joy. It was great, and still greater when the father and mother perceived that neither the mind nor heart of their daughters had been injured. 'He who is born of God,' says St. John, 'the wicked one toucheth him not.'"

We can hardly read this account without being struck by the proof it affords of the earnestness with which family religious training was pursued by the French Protestants of that period. That parental Christian influence should have produced at so early an age an impression which the following years of education by Jesuit teachers were unable to efface, is a fact from which instruction might be drawn for our own times.

The aged grandfather, the Marquis de Rochegude, had formed part of the refugee household, and probably

entered into his rest before the arrival of the two girls, as the archives of Vevey make mention of the decease of Messire de Barjac Seigneur de Rochegude, with an order for funeral honours to be paid to him, in 1695. Dates are omitted in the uncle's narrative, probably to avoid compromising any persons who might have aided the escape of the captives. The Marquis and his son were enrolled as citizens of their adopted country, and the family seem to have been held in high esteem. At their house met, every month, the assembly which deliberated on the affairs of the refugees at Vevey, and provided for the relief of the poor among them. The resources however which remained to the Marquis out of the wreck of his fortune appear to have been very inconsiderable. The family estate, after being confiscated by the King, was conferred upon an aunt of the exiles, who obtained the unworthy reward by abjuring the Reformed Religion.

The narrative from which the above facts are chiefly taken was published in London, in 1715, at the request of an English gentleman, and dedicated to the Earl of Galway, a friend and benefactor of the refugees. From this circumstance it appears that the author was at the time under the protection of the King of England. He seems previously to this period to have been employed in negotiations with some of the Protestant courts of Germany, for the establishment of the refugees in that country, as they had become too numerous in Switzerland. De Rochegude mentions with great simplicity these semi-diplomatic missions, and declares that he had pleaded for religion at the Protestant Courts, but had in no way meddled with affairs of state or war, and had never spoken against the King of France, whom he had always served with fidelity. "It is my consolation," he says, "to think that His Majesty has nothing to reproach me for, except in connection with my attachment to the Religion."

The two sisters, the last surviving members of the family at Vevey, both died in the course of the year 1739.

No. II.

THE reader who desires to know with what degree of vividness and power the truths of the Gospel were preached among these suffering Christians, will probably have been disappointed by the scantiness in these respects of the extract given in the text, and will long for one of Paul Rabaut's own warm and full discourses. The Translator is very happy in being able, through the kind courtesy of M. Athanase Coquerel, Junior, to supply this deficiency, and introduce here an original sermon by the Pastor of the Desert, prepared or completed, August 31st (Friday), 1753, for a communion service, probably on the ensuing Sabbath.

We may imagine the interest with which hearers such as Fabre or de Lasterme would, with their families, press around the preacher and listen to the words of life;—we may see the table spread in the wilderness with the sacramental bread and wine, bearing witness to the peace and security of the Gospel feast;—but also the scouts posted on the neighbouring eminences, to whose vigilance is entrusted the safety of the vast assembly, that the holy festival be not changed into a massacre. After the song of praise and the reading of the Scriptures, the Minister comes forward, the well-known and much-enduring man—in his preaching gown, for there shall be no hurry or disorder in his appearance before God and his people—and ascends the rude pulpit prepared for him. He is about thirty-five years of age, short in stature, his complexion dark, his demeanour grave and calm; but how many in that congregation

have had experience of his kindly manner, his large sympathy, his patient instruction, as well as witnessed his unflinching courage! After a prayer, the "fervour and unction" of which have "penetrated every bosom and disposed hearts the least prepared to listen to the sermon,"* he opens the sacred volume and gives out his text:—

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."
JOHN vii. 37.

"Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars; she hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled; forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding." PROV. ix. 1—6. It is thus, my brethren, that Solomon represents Divine Wisdom as speaking. Under the image of a splendid feast prepared in a magnificent house, she invites sinners who are running after the vanities of the world, and seeking happiness in them, to leave those foolish paths which lead them away from their object, and to seek in religion that solid good which it alone can secure. Here is found the house of the Living God built on the rock, the foundations of which tempests and storms cannot shake. Here God prepares his table, offers the richest provisions, not the meat which perisheth, but that which endures to everlasting life. The hunger and thirst of the soul are here satisfied; there are sublime truths for the intellect, ineffable consolations for the heart, infallible directions for the conduct, and complete felicity for the ages of eternity. Who

* See "History of the Protestants of France," by M. de Felice, page 421. English Translation.

would not then lend an ear to the tender and loving invitations of eternal wisdom?

These invitations relate to *us*, my brethren; they are addressed to us still more directly than to the Jews. Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith, the High Priest of the new covenant, is Himself the Eternal Wisdom of the Father. In Him are "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" which were formerly hidden. It is He who has been made of God unto us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." It was by the Spirit of Christ that Solomon and the other prophets spoke; but it was revealed to them that it was not for themselves but for us that they ministered the things which have been preached to us. Brought up in his school, enlightened by his doctrine, called by his name, invited to his table, destined to possess his glory, it is to us that Divine Wisdom addresses itself. The Lord invites us to eat abundantly of the rich provisions of his house, and to drink of the river of bliss. Having come into the world to save sinners, He addresses himself first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. What did that Good Shepherd leave undone to lead them to his fold, that they might feed in the green pastures? With what earnestness did He seize opportunities of proclaiming to them the truths of salvation! The feast of Pentecost having arrived, He wished to take advantage of that solemnity, which would draw many Jews to Jerusalem, to exhort them anew to believe in Him. It was the last and most solemn day of the feast when Jesus, standing up, said to them with a loud voice, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." The same voice addresses us to-day, my brethren. Jesus speaks to you in the Gospel, He speaks to you by our ministry, by the sacred symbols of his body and blood placed on that table, and which are not only signs, but also seals, pledges, of those inestimable blessings with which He desires to enrich your souls; and

by all these different voices He cries to you, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." Let us endeavour to understand better what our Saviour here says, and to penetrate more deeply into his meaning; and for this purpose let us see in the first place—*who* are the persons He invites—those who thirst; and in the second place—*what* He *prescribes* for them—to come unto Him and drink. Lord Jesus, who art to-day knocking at our doors, grant that, attentive to Thy voice, we may open our hearts to Thee—that we may sup with Thee and Thou with us. Amen!

I. One can never have read the Holy Scriptures to be ignorant that the sacred writers frequently employ figurative modes of speech, and in particular that they represent the spiritual graces destined to secure the happiness of the soul, under the emblem of the aliments which serve for the nourishment of the body. And by a consequence of the same figure, the search after spiritual blessings is represented as hunger and thirst. "Ho, every one that thirsteth," saith the Lord by Isaiah, "come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat, &c." Isaiah lv. 1, 2, 3, &c. We find the same figures in many places in the prophets; Jesus Christ himself often used them, and especially in his conversation with the woman of Samaria. There he represents his grace as living water, as an inexhaustible fountain which springs up into everlasting life; and in our text, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

All this, my brethren, is not difficult to understand. Every one knows what are the properties of water. It serves to quench the thirst or to cleanse the body; now here is a sensible image of the virtue, the divine efficacy of the doctrine of the Lord, which calms the anxieties of the soul, which puts it at its ease, if I may so express myself, which consoles it, purifies it from pollutions

and sins, and washes it white in the blood of the Lamb ; which, in a word, supplies all its necessities and fulfils all its obligations. But to experience the virtue of the health-giving waters of grace there must be a soul athirst. Jesus Christ only offers them to those who are thirsty. What means this thirst? In what does it consist? As a man parched with drought desires to quench his thirst, and has no rest till he has allayed the fever which is consuming him, so a sinner, who feels his misery and corruption, who knows the danger of this condition, earnestly desires to escape from it, to be reconciled to God, and is not satisfied until he has attained his end. It is this which Jesus Christ calls hungering and thirsting after righteousness. These are the weary and heavy laden sinners whom He invites to come to Him, and to whom He promises rest. But it is of too much consequence to us to know what this state is, for us to rest in these generalities ; in order to define in detail all that this spiritual thirst imports, we will mention three things : First, a deep conviction of wretchedness ; Secondly, an ardent desire for deliverance ; Thirdly, the seeking and employing the means which may lead to this end.

I say, First, a deep conviction of wretchedness. It is a lamentable situation in which sinners are, who walk in the ways of their heart and in the sight of their eyes, who, the slaves of sin, obey their passions rather than the voice of the Sovereign Ruler, and neglect to enlighten their minds, to sanctify their hearts, to regulate their lives by the laws of religion, and thus labour after perfection and happiness. What shall be said of such sinners? They are ingrates who insult their benefactor, who, far from being sensible of his kindness, and making a good use of it, treat it with indifference, trample it under foot, use it only to offend Him, and turn his grace into lasciviousness. They are rebels who shake off the yoke of the most rightful of sovereigns, the

tenderest of fathers, who declare themselves enemies of God in their thoughts, and by their wicked works. They are traitors who violate the most sacred engagements, the most binding promises, the most solemn oaths. They are hardened sinners on whom the strongest motives of religion make no impression, who are insensible to the beauty of its precepts, to the sweetness of its promises, to the terror of its threatenings, and to the judgments which the Lord is preparing for them. They are madmen who listen not to reason, who follow no rule, who run headlong to perdition. As certainly as there is a God, holy, just, and good, who detests and punishes crime, who loves and recompenses virtue, so incontestable is it that the sinners we have just described are the objects of his indignation and wrath, that it is to them his threatenings refer, that it is to them He has said, After your hardness and impenitent heart you treasure up unto yourselves "wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds;" that it is for them, finally, that the fires of hell are kindled. It is very deplorable to be in such a state, but it is still more deplorable to be in it and not to feel it; to be ignorant of the peril which it incurs. This was the terrible situation of the angel, that is the pastor, of the church of Laodicea. He said, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;" he knew not that he was "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." How many sinners are there who resemble him, who think themselves in a state of grace while they are in a state of sin, who regard themselves as friends of God though they are his enemies, who say to themselves, "Peace, while there is no peace." Of all the situations in which a sinner can be found, there is none more dangerous than this. A sick man, however dangerous may be his disease, will not have recourse to the remedy if he imagines

himself to be in health. In the same way, a sinner who believes himself to be in a good state will not desire a change; not knowing his spiritual diseases, he will not seek for a remedy. In vain will the threatenings of Almighty God be sounded in his ears, he will not be afraid of them, because he does not believe himself to be of the number of those to whom they are addressed. In vain may a deluge of calamities burst over his head, he will remain in his obduracy, because he will not understand that God is desirous to correct him, and to lead him to repentance.

He, then, who does not feel his misery will not thirst for the health-giving waters of grace; for the first step he must take to experience this spiritual thirst is to know his sins, to understand how hateful they are to God, how dangerous to the soul, and most bitterly to repent of them. You who have experienced the bitterness of repentance, describe to us your remorse, your agitation, your alarm. What *confusion* at the sight of so much insult offered to the Divine Majesty by your thoughts, by your words, by your actions! What *fear* in considering that you have often exposed your soul to become the prey of the flames of hell, to be separated from the Blessed God, for ever the victim of his vengeance, for ever given up to its own despair! What *regret* to have shown yourselves so ungrateful towards your Heavenly Father, to have so little esteemed his benefits, to have resisted his invitations, abused the riches of his patience and long-suffering, to have forsaken Him, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out for yourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water. Such are the reflections which strike down a sinner, which bear consternation and terror into his soul. Thus he will be made to know his wretchedness, his unworthiness, to see how far he is separated from God, and how justly he deserves condemnation and eternal death. What can result from this, my brethren,

if not an ardent desire to remedy these evils, to escape from this condition? Who would be so much his own enemy as to be satisfied with a situation so painful, and risking such terrible consequences? What! a man know that he is at war with God and not labour to be reconciled to Him! Be subject to condemnation and eternal death, and not eagerly seek the revocation of that sentence! On the edge of a precipice, and not wish that a charitable hand should withdraw him and prevent his fall! Ah! when one knows with what goodness God receives sinners who return to Him, what are the joys found in communion with Him, what are the precious blessings with which He loads his children, both in this life and in the next, one cannot but desire to be introduced into his holy habitation, to be fed with the provisions of his table. See in the prodigal son a picture of those sinners who are escaping from their wretchedness, who are seeking to be delivered from it. "How many," said he, "of the hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go unto my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

Finally, it is not sufficient to feel our misery, to wish to be delivered from it; we must use the means which may lead to this end. It is this especially which distinguishes true from false repentance; the apparent penitent may feel some regret for having sinned, and some wish to obtain pardon and change his conduct; but the desire for reformation is weak, it is merely a good inclination; he says, "I am willing, but ——:" he does not seriously put his hand to the work; he has more love for evil than for good. The true penitent sees nothing so hateful as the sins for which conscience reproaches him, nothing more dangerous than the condition in which he finds himself: he has nothing so much

at heart as to be reconciled to God, and therefore he neglects no means to accomplish it. Fervent prayers, reading, pious meditation, flight from places and persons that have caused him to stumble, diligent study of his own heart in order to fortify weak points, every thing is made use of to effect a change, that he may become a new man created after God in righteousness and true holiness. The prodigal son was not satisfied with forming good resolutions, he executed them; he went to his father, confessed his wanderings, implored his forgiveness, and was thenceforth submissive and obedient.

Such, my brethren, is the nature of the spiritual thirst mentioned in the text; such is the conduct of a sinner thirsting for grace. He feels deeply his need of it, he earnestly desires it, he neglects nothing to obtain it. Such are the sinners whom Jesus Christ invites. Let us see what He prescribes to them—to come unto Him and drink—which will form the subject of our second head.

II. To come to Jesus Christ is to believe in Him, to look to Him as the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world; to profess his doctrine, to practise his precepts. This appears from various places in the Gospel where this mode of speaking is employed; thus in the 6th chapter of St. John we see that to come to Jesus Christ and to believe in Him signify one and the same thing; witness those words in verse 35. “He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” In the same sense He says, “Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” He then explains what He means by coming to Him; “Take my yoke upon you,” says He, “and learn of Me.” When Jesus Christ invites you to believe in Him it is not a dead faith that He requires. How many proofs did He give the Jews that He was the Messiah foretold by the prophets; not only did He come into the world at the

time prescribed by the sacred oracles, not only did He descend from the tribe of Judah and the family of David, but in addition to this He wrought before them a great number of miracles, which proved that He spoke and acted in the name and by the authority of God. The works, said He, that my Father hath given Me to do bear witness of Me that it is He who hath sent Me. Though we live in a time very remote from that when our Saviour confirmed by miracles the divinity of his mission, our faith ceases not to have the most solid foundations. We have not seen the miracles of the Son of God, nor those of his disciples, except as these facts are reported to us by unimpeachable and ocular witnesses, whose sincerity goes to the extent of unveiling their own faults; by witnesses whom all kinds of motives, and especially their own temporal and eternal interests, would have bound to silence if these miracles had not taken place. We have yet further guarantees in the greatest enemies of this religion, the Jews and Pagans, who have not ventured to call in question the miracles of our Saviour. We have for guarantees the success of these miracles, the great number of proselytes who embraced the Christian faith in the most perilous circumstances, in the midst of the most violent persecutions. They would have carefully avoided exposing themselves to so many calamities if they had not been convinced, by the demonstration of the Spirit and the power of God, that Christianity was the only way of salvation. Again, if we believe in Jesus Christ, it is because his doctrine is the most excellent, the most worthy of God which has ever appeared, the best adapted to enlighten the mind, to sanctify the heart, to inspire the most solid hopes,—it is, finally, because we see with our own eyes the accomplishment of a great number of the predictions of our Saviour, of the prophets, and of the apostles, such as the dispersion of the Jews, and the conversion of the Pagans. The faith of Christ has then

solid foundations, and consequently Jesus Christ requires nothing but what is reasonable when He calls men to believe in Him.

Let us not measure this faith, my brethren, by the idea which the conduct of the majority of Christians would give. They have only a dead faith, and Jesus Christ requires a living faith which purifies the heart, and which makes its possessors to become new men. We only come to Him, we only believe in Him, in so far as we submit to his yoke and become his disciples, as He himself said. Now what is that, I pray you? Is it not to be devoted to Him in spirit and in heart? Is it not to regard as certain the truths that He teaches us, and to make profession of them whatever it may cost to flesh and blood? Is it not to regard his precepts as right, indispensable, and by them to regulate the conduct? Is it not to trust his promises, to regard the blessings which are the subjects of them as preferable to those which men of the world idolize? You see that the faith which Jesus Christ demands is a sanctifying faith, which changes the heart, which regenerates it, which manifests itself by love and by all kinds of good works. One of the principal acts of faith is to apply to ourselves the consoling promises of the Gospel. Those who live in sin cannot make this application, but a Christian united to his Saviour, who prefers Him to all else, who studies to please Him, being joined to Him by faith, has thus a right to all the blessings of the covenant of grace. He can say, For me Jesus came into the world, for me He shed his blood, his merit is mine, I am clothed with his righteousness as with a rich robe, by means of which I shall be admitted into the presence of the King of Glory. It was thus that St. Paul applied to himself the merits of his Saviour. He "*loved me,*" said he, "*He gave himself for me.*" I was the chief of sinners, but I obtained mercy. It is thus, my brethren, that those who are athirst in the sense in which Jesus

Christ speaks, drink of the health-giving waters of grace; and the divine Saviour makes us clearly understand what is the means of quenching this thirst; that is to say—the repenting sinner who embraces by a living faith Jesus Christ dying for his sins, rising again for his justification, finds in Him the remedy for every evil and the source of every blessing. What causes thy anxieties and alarms? Is it the sentence of condemnation and of death which Divine justice has pronounced against thee? But Jesus has undergone that sentence. He has put Himself in thy place; He has borne thy sins in his own body on the tree, He has been made a curse for thee, that thou mightest be justified before God through Him; thou canst then strike up the song of victory—Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God Himself who justifies them—who shall condemn them? Jesus Christ has died, yea, rather He has risen again, is seated at the right hand of God where He maketh intercession for us. What fearest thou then?—thy corruption? It is that doubtless which thou hast most to fear, but if thou believe in Jesus Christ, thy faith shall overcome the world, and the Divine Saviour shall strengthen thee with his might, He shall communicate to thee the efficacy of his Spirit, according to the promise which follows my text:—"From him that believeth in Me," says He, "there shall flow rivers of living water;" and elsewhere, I will give you the Holy Spirit. It is in being united to Jesus Christ by a true faith that man finds real satisfaction, solid happiness. The subdued passions no longer make war in his soul, but permit him to enjoy that peace which passeth all understanding. Having his mind enlightened on the true value of things, and his heart rightly disposed, far from being seduced by objects which men of the world idolize, he sees them with pity running after deceitful vanities. And engaging only in things worthy of him, suitable to the holy calling with which he has

been honoured, his enjoyment increases by the solid blessings he realizes, he tastes ineffable delights in communion with the Lord, which to him are the pledges of the supreme and eternal felicity of the life to come. "Whosoever," says Jesus Christ, "drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; it shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

See, my brethren, on what grounds Jesus Christ says to penitent sinners, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." He does not send them to natural religion; its light is too feeble, it points out no way of reconciling the sinner with God. He does not send them to the Jewish religion; its victims cannot atone for sin, and its threatenings are more calculated to cast into despair than to give rise to confidence. Jesus Christ alone can be the refuge of the penitent; He alone can calm the agitation of his conscience and procure him peace. He is "the Way, the Truth, the Life;" no one comes to the Father but by Him. There is no other name given under heaven among men by which we may be saved but the name of Jesus. It is then with reason that He cries, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." But enough on the words of our text; it is time to come to the conclusion of this discourse.

CONCLUSION.—Let us admire, my brethren, with what goodness Jesus invites sinners who are overwhelmed with the weight of their guilt to come and draw from the inexhaustible spring of his grace the consolation and rest which they need. How admirably He sustains the attractive title of Saviour! *Jesus Christ is athirst for the salvation of souls.* He goes to seek the lost sheep to bring them into his fold. Though his first efforts may have little success, He is not discouraged; He returns to the charge, He insists in season and out of season, He cries with energy, "If any man thirst, let him come

unto Me and drink." This Saviour rejects no one ; He calls equally Jews and Pagans ; He does not repel even the greatest sinners. " They that be whole," says He, " need not a physician, but they that are sick." What goodness ! What mercy ! What encouragement to go with confidence to the Throne of Grace, that we may find help in time of need ! Who will not love a Saviour so compassionate ?

A doctrine so consolatory ought to produce fruits of gratitude and sanctification, and yet a contrary use is made of it. We ought to say with St. Paul, Jesus Christ " died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him who died for them and rose again." He bore " our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness." Instead of uttering such language, that of the saints, there are those who say, as the profane, Let us sin that grace may abound. Let the impious men who think and speak thus learn, since they seem ignorant of it, that Jesus Christ is no minister of sin, that He has not come to countenance iniquity, but to destroy it. Let them learn that He only offers his grace to sinners who feel their wretchedness, who groan under their corruption, who desire to be delivered, not only from the penalty of sin but also from sin itself ; who make every effort to escape from the slavery of vice and to come into the glorious liberty of the children of God. It is so true that this is the constant doctrine of the Gospel, that the opposite sentiment is the grossest and the most condemnable of errors. The grossest, because there is no truth more incontestable than this : God wills that men should be virtuous and good ; the most condemnable, because it is opposed to the object of religion, which is to form men to holiness. It is for us, my brethren, to examine if we feel our wretchedness,—if we desire to be delivered from it. Have we taken account of our ways ? Have we exa-

mined ourselves to know if we are in the faith? Have we passed in review the many sinful speeches which our lips have uttered, the many evil thoughts which our minds have conceived, the many detestable actions which have polluted our lives? Have we seriously reflected on the little care we have taken to be pious towards God, just and charitable towards our neighbours, chaste and temperate in regard to ourselves? Has the consideration of the great number of our sins, of their heinousness, of the aggravating circumstances which accompanied them, produced a holy confusion, a salutary repentance? Have we presented to the Lord the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart? Have we felt the blackness of our ingratitude, the enormity of our rebellions? Have our souls been agonized, cast down, dismayed, at the sight of our deplorable situation? Have we had recourse to the heavenly Physician to expose to Him our maladies and to obtain their cure? Have we made use of the means which He points out to us to draw near to Him and to become recipients of his grace? There are without doubt some honest seekers after God who have done what we have just described, who endeavour to maintain themselves in this state and even to make progress in it. But we have great reason to fear that the number of these is very small. How many are there who are very far from possessing that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord," and who consequently have the greatest reason to be alarmed, yet are as tranquil as if they had absolutely nothing to fear. One man is the slave of this vice, another of that; one of avarice, another of impurity; this man of pride, that of the spirit of revenge. Such have neither love to God nor charity for their neighbour, nor compassion for their own souls, whose salvation they are neglecting. They tremble not,—they are in the most perfect security.

How surprising soever this conduct may appear, the

causes of it may be easily discovered. It is certain that very loose ideas are formed of the holiness which the Gospel prescribes. Though Jesus Christ has said that the gate of life is strait, that the way to heaven is narrow, and that there are few who walk in it; that, on the contrary, the road to perdition is wide, and that there are many who follow it, in spite of this, I say, men think it an easy thing to be saved,—that it may be accomplished without painstaking, without effort. This is the reason why men are as tranquil while walking in the way to perdition, as if they were walking in the path to heaven. Add to this that there are so many who do not know what there is sad or dangerous in their condition, because they scarcely reflect at all upon it. There is perhaps no duty more generally neglected than the examination of one's self. Men live, so to speak, from day to day without reflecting either on what they do, or on what they ought to do; they take little account of their conduct; they do not weigh the consequences of their actions. Can we be surprised after this if they know not themselves, if they feel neither their misery nor their wants. My brethren, since we know the source of the evil, it is for us to bring to it the suitable remedies. Let us not judge of what must be done to be saved by the corrupt maxims of the world, but by those of the Gospel. Whatever is not conformed to this standard will lead us astray. It is then by the light of the Word of God that we may know our state; it is by using this divine torch that we shall discover the depth of corruption in our hearts, those perverse inclinations, that fearful accumulation of sins of which we have been guilty. But for this purpose we must apply the plumb-line to conscience, impose silence on self-love and, in one word, examine with a serious intention really to know ourselves.

Oh that I could, my brethren, unveil yourselves to yourselves! that I could make you comprehend all the

wretchedness of a soul estranged from God, who has no communion with Him, who is consequently subject to condemnation ! If you really knew this condition, if you felt all its danger, you would have no rest till the Lord had spoken peace to you.

But, doubtless, the holy word which I have preached to you shall not return to God without effect ; doubtless, among those who hear me there are sinners weary and heavy laden, souls hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of Jesus Christ. O ! go with confidence to this divine Saviour ; it is you whom He calls, it is you whom He desires to refresh and satisfy ; it is for you He has shed his blood, it is to you that He offers all the treasures of his grace. Go, then, to Him with a firm assurance that you will find in his blood the remission of your sins, and the principle of a new life. Go to Him, ashamed and grieved for having offended Him, resolved never to abandon Him, to have no other will than his. Go to Him, meditating on his death, penetrated with his love, glowing with affection for Him, and gratitude for his benefits. He is, so to speak, crucified before your eyes by the symbols of his body and blood which are here presented to you. Do not satisfy yourselves with contemplating them ; eat the sacred bread, drink of the cup of blessing ; may you receive with the signs the thing signified. May we return justified to our homes, may we be henceforth his faithful disciples, that we may for ever drink from the river of his pleasures ! May He deign to confer upon us this grace ! To that Divine Saviour, to the Father, to the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

No. III.

Translation of a Letter from Paul Rabaut to a Friend in Geneva.

The original of this Letter is in an imperfect state, the pages being worn out at the bottom. The following is all that remains of it :—

SIR, AND VERY DEAR FRIEND,

What overwhelming tidings you have communicated ! Stroke upon stroke ! My soul is transfixed with grief. Hardly has one man of God been taken away from us when we lose another ; our tears are not yet dried for the loss of the first, before that of the second opens a new source of sorrow. I venture to say no one has felt more keenly than myself the blows of the rod which is smiting us so severely. No, the death of my nearest relatives would not have cast me down so much as that of these two great men. I could heartily have said, like Elisha, when he saw his dear master borne away : “ My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof ! ” I am well aware, my dear friend, that you and I are not the only mourners. I seem to be a witness of the lamentations and sighs of all ranks in the church. Your Academy has lost two of its finest ornaments, theologians truly worthy of the name. So firm in the faith, teaching only that which they had received.

. I am not surprised at the affliction of the church at Geneva. Could it see with a dry eye two of its most brilliant lights extinguished ; vigilant pastors, preachers full of unction and power, examples to the flock by the holiness of their lives ? How much help lost to the church which had the happiness of possessing them ! Dear Refugees, brands plucked out of the fire, sad frag-

ments of our churches, you have lost protectors, fathers ; and you whose distresses were so often abundantly consoled, your tears will form the eulogium of this new Corneille better than the most eloquent discourses.

But what am I doing, my dear friend ? I forget that I am writing a letter and not a funeral oration. My grief is soothed in mingling with the sorrow of all those to whom this is a common affliction. Prudence here imposes upon me silence, which I maintain with regret ; my heart longs to utter itself. Our churches—— but I forbear. Let us say nothing of those excellent works which the wickedness of men does not allow to be manifested, but which the just Remunerator will unveil and recompense at the great day of retributions. Must I be equally silent, my dear friend, on the loss which I and my children have sustained ? You know better than any one with what goodness we were protected . . . I know that there still remain some zealous friends ; I venture to commend myself as well as my children to their kindness. I assure them of my gratitude ; I also beg.....

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I should not dare to undertake the duties of the office. It becomes me better to address myself, with all the earnestness of which I am capable, to Him who alone can fill us with joy and peace by the virtue of His Spirit, to ask Him to console their dejected hearts. I ask the same also for you, for I know that you greatly need it. Pray reciprocate this for me. With the greatest possible esteem and affection, I am



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